DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 573 CS 507 263

TITLE	Proceedings of the 1990 Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (73rd, Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 1-4, 1990). Part XI: Miscellaneous Studies.
INSTITUTION	Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.
PUB DATE	Aug 90
NOTE	421p.; For other sections of these proceedings, see CS 507 256-262.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC17 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Abortions; Advertising; Agenda Setting; Childrens Literature; Communication Research; Editors; Film Production; Media Research; *News Media; *News Reporting; Nurses; *Periodicals; *Persuasive Discourse; Public Opinion; Risk; Social Problems; *Writing for Publication
IDENTIFIERS	Journalists; Letters to the Editor; Political Cartoons; Reviewers

ABSTRACT

The miscellaneous studies section of the proceedings includes the following 14 papers: "The News Shapers" (Lawrence C. Soley); "Journalism and Mass Communication Journal Reviewers: Their Standards and Perceived Roles in the Research Process" (Stanley T. Wearden and Fred F. Endres); "Celebrity Advertising: Perception, Persuasion and Processing" (Abhilasha Mehta and Clive M. Davis); "The Invisible Woman: Two Decades of Magazine Images of Nurses" (Ann E. Preston); "News Coverage of the Abortion Issue: Framing Changes in the 1980's" (Jennifer Swenson); "A Census and Analysis of Journals Publishing Research About Magazines, 1977-1987" (Marcia R. Prior-Miller and Kellie L. Esch); "Does the Representation of Contemporary Social Issues in Childrens' Magazines Reflect Reality?" (Edna Pierce Whiteley); "Independent Film Fortunes in the 1980s: The Spring of Hope, The Winter of Despair'" (Mary M. Cronin and Barry R. Litman); "Political Cartoons: A Semiotic Analysis" (John Anderson); "Need for Cognition and Self-Report of Persuasive Message Attributes" (M. Mark Miller and others); "The Abortion Clause' of U.S. Foreign Population Policy: A Feminist Cultural Analysis of the Debate" (Rashmi Luthra); "The Impact of Risk Message Content and Construction on Comments about Risk Embedded in Letters to Friends'" (Sharon Dunwoody and others); "The Construction of Interpretive Communities and Uses and Gratifications in Letters to the Editor" (Bruce W. McKinzie); and "Some Determinants of Accurate Perception of Public Opinion" (Ann Marie Major and L. Erwin Atwood). (MG)

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ED323573

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1990 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION (73rd, Minneapolis, MN, August 1-4, 1990). Part XI: Miscellaneous Studies.

CS507263

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A Paper Presented to the RTVJ division of AEJMC
at the August 1990 Convention in Minneapolis, MN.

The News Shapers

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THE NEWS SHAPERS

Abstract

This study examined the "news shapers" who appeared in a sample of network news programs. News shapers were defined as former government officials, experts, journalists, think tank "scholars," and university professors, whose function was to provide background or insights about news events.

This study found that the networks repeatedly used the same individuals, who were principally from private, eastern universities, centrist and conservative think tanks, and previous Republican administrations. More than 62 percent of the appearances by former government officials were by Republicans.

INTRODUCTION

The media have always been criticized for being politically biased, but criticism intensified after Vice-President Spiro Agnew claimed that the news media were "giving the American people a highly selected and often biased presentation of the news" (Kenworthy 1969). According to the Vice-President, network news reports were slanted against the Nixon adminstration, but uncritical of Nixon's opponents:

> [The media] can make or break by their coverage a moratorium on the war. They can elevate to national prominence within a week. They can reward some politicians with national exposure and ignore others...(New York Times November 14, 1969, p. 24).

Agnew suggested that the networks were elevating extremists like Stokely Carmichael to prominence, while ceaselessly attacking the president. "How many marches and demonstrations would we have if marchers did not know that the ever-faithful TV cameras would be there to record their antics for the next news show?" the Vice-President asked rhetorically. "In this search for excitement and controversy, has not more than equal time gone to the minority of Americans who specialize in attacking the United States -- its institutions and its citizens?" Agnew added that he was not advocating censorship, only exposing the biases of the media.

Following the Vice-President's criticisms of the media, several books were published that claimed to document the anti-Nixon bias of network news programs. The Arlington Press, a conservative publishing company, issued The Left-Leaning Antenna by Joseph Kelley

(1971) and the Gods of Antenna by Bruce Herschensohn (1976), a former Nixon administration official.

TV Guide reporter Edith Efron published the News Twisters, an allegedly objective study of network news coverage of the 1968 presidential campaign. Efron (1971) concluded that the networks were "massively slanted against Richard Nixon," airing seven times as many anti-Nixon as pro-Nixon stories. Her conclusions were arrived at by reading transcripts of network news broadcasts and coding them as to whether they exhibited anti-Nixon, pro-Humphrey, pro-black militant, or other biases.

The year following publication of the News Twisters, the American Institute for Political Communication (AIPC 1972) conducted a study that examined biases in network news coverage of the 1972 presidential primary campaign. The newscasts were coded by whether they exhibited pro-Humphrey or pro-McGovern biases. The board of directors of the AIPC consisted primarily of Humphrey supporters -- individuals like AFL-CIO leader Lane Kirkland. The study found that the network news reports were pro-McGovern and anti-Humphrey.

Stevenson, et. al. (1973) replicated Efron's study and found that her conclusions were more biased than the network reporting that she allegedly exposed. For example, Efron (1971, p. 283) coded the following October 17 broadcast as anti-Nixon and claimed that it characterized Richard Nixon as "an obstacle to peace":

> KALB: The strong possibility of a bombing halt does not appear to be a political stunt, designed to win votes for Hubert Humphrey. It is the result, first, of an obvious softening in Hanoi's policy, and second,

> in the President's willingness to see it and act upon it ...High officials who have been wrapped up in the Vietnam agony for years are hopeful that Hanoi will accept, because they believe the North Vietnamese would prefer to deal with a lame duck Lyndon Johnson than with the current frontrunner, Richard Nixon.

Stevenson, et. al. (1973) concluded that network reporting was evenhanded during the 1968 presidential campaign.

Although Stevenson, et. al. (1973) demonstrated that the methods employed by Efron (1971) are unreliable, this has not stopped politically-conservative researchers from using the same method. Two studies published by the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, employed Efron's (1971) method. Clancey and Robinson (1985) coded the "spin" or "tone" of comments made by network journalists during 200 broadcasts about the 1984 presidential campaign. The reserchers allege that "Ronald Reagan's bad press total was ten times greater than his good press total," while the Mondale-Ferraro ticket received more good than bad press (p. 50). Lichter, Amundson and Noyes (1988) coded presidential election stories that were aired by the networks between February 8, 1987 and June 7, 1988. Lichter, Amundson and Noyes (1988) found that Democrats received slightly more positive assessments than Republicans (i.e., 56 percent to 54 percent), but many more when only the statements by reporters were coded (i.e., 64 percent to 54 percent). The researchers also claimed that "the most liberal of the major candidates in each party received better coverage than any of the competitors" (p. 99).

Because of the subjectivity inherent in the methods employed by

Efron (1971), Clancey and Robinson (1985), and Lichter, Amundson and Noyes (1988), another method was developed by communication researchers for assessing bias -- coding the sources, not the messages that appear in news segments. Dominick (1977) coded a sample of newscasts that were telecast between 1973 and 1975 by their geographic source. Dominick (1977) found that two-thirds of the total national news reports came from three places: California, New York and Washington, DC. About half of all national news minutes focused on Washington. The midwest, southwest and southeast were undercovered compared to their percentages of the U.S. population, and two states -- Pennsylvania and Ohio -- were "grossly" undercovered. Dominick (1977) concluded that there were biases in the selection and origination of news stories, but did not claim that they were intentional. Dominick (1977) suggested that the biases were most likely the result of where the networks base their news teams. The networks have crews in cities like New York, Washinton and Los Angeles, which explains why so much news originates from these locations.

The study by Dominick (1977) was replicated and extended by Whitney, et. al. (1989). Whitney, et. al. (1989) coded the sources and types of news in a sample of network newscasts that aired between 1982 and 1984. Like Dominick (1977), Whitney, et. al. (1989) found regional biases in network news reports: The northeast and Pacific regions were overrepresented, while the midwest, southwest and southeast were underrepresented. The researchers also found that women were underrepresented as news sources, accounting for just 13.6 perecnt of the appearances by identifiable sources.

Whitney, et. al. (1989) found that government officials were the most frequently cited of any source, accounting for 28.2 perecnt of all appearances. Spokesmen for businesses also appeared frequently. They accounted "for one of eleven of the sources used and just under a third of all institutional sources" (Whitney, et. al. 1989, p. 170). Like businessmen, "other professionals" appeared often, accounting for 19.3 percent of all network news sources. The "other professional" category included attorneys, medical doctors, university professors and sports figures. The high representation of this category is not surprising because the researchers coded all news segments, including reports on sports, entertainment, medicine, and religion. Whitney, et. al. (1989) did not confine their study to international or domestic political reporting.

Most surprisingly, Whitney, et. al. (1989) found that representatives of political, women's, civil rights, human rights and labor groups rarely appeared as sources on the network news. Spokespersons for all these groups combined accounted for only a twentieth of all sources.

Another study that examined news sources was conducted for Fairness and Accuracy in reporting (FAIR 1989). FAIR (1989) examined and coded into categories the individuals who appeared on ABC's Nightline between January 1, 1985 and April 30, 1988. The study found that women and blacks rarely appeared. Blacks accounted for 6.2 percent and women accounted for 10.3 percent of Nightline's guests. FAIR (1989) also found that three-fourths of the appearances were by "elites," who were defined as former and current government officials and "professionals."

The FAIR (1989) study concluded that Nightline systematically excluded citizens who opposed U.S. foreign policy, leaders of public interest organizations such as Ralph Nader, and spokespersons of the political left. To these charges, Nightline executive producer Richard Kaplan replied that the events of the day, not he or Ted Koppel, determined the show's guests. Kaplan insisted that "newsmakers" were invited on, not individuals that he prefered (Gerard 1989).

Brown, et. al. (1987) examined the diversity and types of sources cited by the New York Times, Washington Post and four North Carolina newspapers during "two randomly constructed six-day weeks" of 1979 and 1980. Brown, et. al. (1987) found that women were rarely used as sources. Women accounted for just 10 percent of the 5,248 sources used in the news stories. U.S. government officials, on the other hand, constituted 31 percent of the sources used. Foreign, U.S., state and local officials together constituted 55.4 percent of all sources cited. "Affiliated" U.S. citizens constituted 24.4 percent of the sources. An affiliated citizen was defined by Brown, et. al. (1987) in a manner similar to the way "professional" was defined by FAIR (1989): An affiliated citizens was an individual associated with a medical, religious, business, law, higher education, or political party institution. Unlike the FAIR (1989) study, the "affiliated" category used by the Brown, et.al. (1987) included individuals from labor and other public interest groups.

An analysis of the defense and terrorism experts on the McNeil-Lehrer News Hour was conducted by Herman and Chomsky (1988). This study employed more narrowly defined source categories than used by FAIR (1989) or Whitney, et. al. (1989), but included news makers, as well as other sources. Herman and Chomsky (1988) distinguished current from former U.S.

government officials, and distinguished among types of professionals. Academics, journalists, consultants, representatives of "conservative think tanks" and "other" professionals were separately coded.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) found that former and current government officials appeared with equal frequency on the McNeil-Lehrer News Hour. Current officials accounted for 20 percent of the appearances, as did former officials. Journalists accounted for 25.8 percent of the apppearances. The next most frequently appearing sources were academics (i.e., professors) and representatives of "conservative think tanks" like the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

One problem with the Herman and Chomsky (1988) and FAIR (1989) studies is that they did not distinguish newsmakers from other persons. News makers, such as government officials, are individuals who are the legitimate focus of the news. They are distinguishable from the other sources coded by Herman and Chomsky (1988), such as former officials, journalists, professors or think tank spokespersons, who provide background or analyses for viewers, but are not the focus of the news.

The purpose of this study is to examine the non-newsmaker sources used on the television network news. These non-newsmakers are called "news shapers" within this study. News shapers are individuals who are not the focus of a news story, but nonetheless appear on the news. The news shapers provide background, explain events, or make predictions concerning the outcome of still unfolding stories. News shapers are former officials, professors, think tank spokespersons, journalists or other "analysts" who are supposedly detached from, but nonetheless informed about, the news event.

This study examines the political affiliations, institutional associations, and "expertise" of the individuals whom the network news have chosen to "shape" their news. It differs from previous studies that have analyzed news sources primarily by distinguishing newsmakers from news shapers, and by identifying and profiling every individual who appeared on the news in the sampled period. This study also differs from previous research by focusing exclusively on international and domestic political stories, excluding entertainment, sports, medicine and weather reports.

The importance of this topic is underscored by research evidence which suggests that network television news shapers are significant factors in moving public opinion. Page, Shapiro and Dempsey (1987) examined the responses to public policy questions which were obtained from surveys administered about three months apart. Page, Shapiro and Dempsey (1987) coded the sources and statements made during network news broadcasts within the three month intervals. The sources that they analyzed included news announcers, presidents, interest group spokespersons, and "experts." Experts were defined by Page, Shapiro and Dempsey (1987) as former government officials, think tank spokespersons, and academics, who appeared to have no financial or political stakes in the issue on which they were commenting. Analyses of changes in public opinion showed that expert commentary was a significant determinant of the public opinion shifts.

METHOD

A sample was selected from among the network evening newscasts airing between January 1, 1987 and December 30, 1988. The selection procedure consisted of randomly selecting 3 two week clusters from 1987 and 1988, for a total six weeks of programming. Unlike the study of

Whitney, et. al. (1989), weekend as well as weekday newscasts were included in the sample. The selected intervals were: January 15-28, 1988; February 1-14, 1987; May 7- 21, 1988; August 1-14, 1987; September 14-28, 1987; and November 8-21, 1988. The six intervals contained 86 days or a maximum 258 newscasts by the three networks.

The actual newscasts were not analyzed, but the summary transcripts published by Vanderbilt University in the Television News Index and Abstract were. To assure that the titles of news shapers published in the Television News Index and Abstract were the same as those broadcast by the networks, tapes of twelve newscasts were viewed at the Vanderbilt Archive and compared with the summary trancripts. The comparison showed that the titles of individuals in the transcipts were identical to those appearing in the newscasts, except that the transcripts frequently attached the title "spokesman" or "spokesperson" to appearances by individuals associated with think tanks and universities, when no such title appeared in the broadcasts. For example, James Chace was described as a Carnegie Endowment spokesman in the transcript, but was simply described as from the Carnegie Endowment in the broadcast (CBS-May 9, 1988). This difference has no effect on the coding categories used in this study.

The transcripts were coded as to whether they concerned domestic political issues, international affairs, or other content. Domestic issues were operationalized to include elections; internal economic matters such as actions of the Federal Reserve Bank; the budget deficit; hearings, investigations and inquiries by congressional committees and special prosecutors, including the investigations concerning "Irangate"; and court decisions. International affairs included issues related to the military, national security or defense, including appropriations for weapons systems; international economics or aid, including reports concerning the U.S. trade imbalance; terrorism; and foreign affairs. The "other" category included news reports on the arts, science, sports, human interest, personalities, entertainment, or student affairs. Whitney, et. al. (1989) used the latter as separate categories in their analysis. All of the stories coded as "other" were deleted from the analysis, producing a study of the news shapers who discussed domestic and international politics.

The categories of news shapers used in this study were taken from Herman and Chomsky (1988):

> Think tank spokespersons: individuals that are associates of foundations, centers, or institutes that conduct research and publish policy papers
>
> Experts, Analysts and Consultants: individuals who were described by the networks as such in newscasts
>
> Journalists: editors, reporters, columnists, and broadcast news reporters who work for U.S. media , but do not work for the networks
>
> Former Politicians and U.S. Government Officials: people who are no longer in government, including the advisors, aides, speechwriters and press secretaries of former politicians and officials
>
> Academics: individuals described as professors, political scientists, historians, sociologists, or whose title is not given, but who are described as spokespersons or representatives of universities

Economists: individiduals described as "economists" by the
networks

Other: including lobbyists, pollsters, psychiatrists, and
teachers who provide background information, but are
not involved in the news event.

The coding of individuals into these categories excluded appearances by individuals who appeared as news makers rather than news shapers. Former government officials, such as Robert McFarlane or Oliver North, who were involved in the actual news event, were not coded. Journalists who discussed their experiences, contacts, and stories, or provided firsthand accounts of news events that they had witnessed, were also excluded (For example, see Carl Rowan's comments of May 10, 1988).

To assess the reliability of the categories, two judges independently coded the summary transcripts of 42 broadcasts (or two weeks of programming). The lowest level of agreement reached was 87 percent for the stories identified as "domestic news." The nonagreement surfaced exclusively with stories such as Donald Regan's disclosure that Nancy Reagan used an astrologer (see May 9, 1988), which had political, but no domestic policy, implications. The agreement for international stories was 93 percent. Among the news stories on which the judges agreed, there was 96 percent agreement about who was and was not a news shapers. Given the high level of inter-judge agreement, a single judge coded the remaining newscasts selected for inclusion in the sample.

Once the news shapers were identified, their backgounds and political affiliations were determined using standard biographical reference sources such as Who's Who in America, Contemporary

Authors, and Biography Index, which were located using the Biography and Genealogy Master Index. For individuals not listed in these sources, other techniques were employed. Political consultants and experts were identified using the Political Resource Directory.

The political affiliations and posts of former government officials were determined using editions of the U.S. Government Manual and the Congressional Staff Directory. The university affiliations of individuals described as professors, historians and sociologists were determined using the National Faculty Directory.

This information was used to politically classify analysts, experts, consultants and former government officials. Officials in the Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford and Reagan administrations were coded as "Republicans"; officials in the Kennedy, Johnson and Carter governments were coded as "Democrats." The biographies were also used to determine the accuracy of the descriptions provided by the networks.

While the above study is capable of describing the characteristics of news shapers included in the sample, it cannot provide counts of the exact number of times particular news shapers appeared during 1987-88. To address the question of exactly how often certain news shapers appeared on the network news, a second study was undertaken. The second study employed a method similar to the first, except that twelve two-week intervals were randomly selected and used to generate a list of news shaper names. The 12 intervals included the six analyzed in the sample study, and six others: January 1-14, 1987; March 14-28, 1988; April 14-28, 1987; July 1-14, 1988; ; and December 14-28, 1987. The twelve intervals contained 173 days or 23.6 percent of all days in 1987 and 1988. Issues of the Television News Index and

Abstract for the selected days were then analyzed, and the names of news shapers appearing in the broadcasts were transcribed.

The names of news shapers that were obtained through the sampling process were then compared to the 1987 and 1988 indexes for the Television News Index and Abstracts to determine how often each news shaper appeared. This procedure produced a list of each appearance made by the news shaper and, by examining, the transcription of the broadcast contained in the Television News Index and Abstract, allowed us to determine whether the individual appeared as a news shaper or news maker. Only appearances by news shapers were counted.

After the list of frequently-appearing news shapers was compiled, biographies of each individual on the list were obtained using the previously described methods.

RESULTS

There were 234 broadcasts in the 86 days analyzed for the sample study. During the 86 days, 24 newscasts were either not scheduled or were preempted. Within the 234 broadcasts, there were 260 appearances by "news shapers" or slightly more than one appearance per broadcast.

Of the three networks, CBS used "news shapers" more frequently than either ABC or NBC. There were 115 appearances by shapers on CBS, which consisted 44.2 percent of all network appearances (see Table 1). This can be compared to 81 appearances on ABC, and 64 appearances on NBC. These differences, however, are not statistically significant ($x^2 = 12.26$, d.f. = 12).

[Insert Table 1 Here]

Among the seven categories used in this study, "experts, analysts and consultants" appeared most frequently to provide viewers with background, or to make predictions concerning the outcome of still-unfolding news events. More than half (i.e., 36 of 70) of these analysts, experts and consultants appeared on the CBS network.

The next most frequently appearing category of news shapers was former U.S. government officials. The networks used the former officials 53 times. Former government officials did not appear with greater frequency on any one network than another, although former officials appeared slightly more often on ABC than on the other networks. Twenty of the 81 shapers (i.e., 24.7 percent) on ABC were described as former officials, while only 19 of 115 (i.e. 16.5 percent) on CBS were described as former officials.

"Think tank" spokespersons, closely followed by academics, were the next most frequently appearing categories used as news shapers by the networks. Of the 260 appearances on the networks, 44 (16.9 percent) were described as spokespersons from "think tanks," while 40 (15.4 percent) were described as historians, political scientists, sociologists or professors (i.e., academics).

The fewest appearances were made by persons described as economists, who commented on the U.S. budget deficit, world debt, ~~or~~ tax policies, and by persons coded as "other" specialists. The "other" category included pollsters (CBS-Sept. 28, 1987), authors (ABC-Aug. 5, 1987), a history teacher (CBS-Nov. 9, 1988), and a lobbyist (NBC-Feb. 7, 1987). The person described as a "lobbyist" was conservative activist Paul Weyrich, whom even Rev. Jerry Falwell described "as pretty far out" (Bennett 1988, p. 393). He is currently president of the Free Congress Research and Educational Foundation. Weyrich appeared on the NBC network news to comment on the possibility that the strategic defense initiative (SDI) might be deployed early.

The 260 appearances were made by 177 people. Of the 177, 143 appeared only once, while 34 were interviewed twice or more. Thus, 34 people accounted for 117, or 45 percent of all, appearances.

Only 16 of the 260 appearances (i.e., 6.2 percent) were made by women, which suggests that shaping the news is a "manly art." The 16 appearances were made by 13 women. One woman, Alice Rivlin, was interviewed on three occassions and another, Linda DiVall, was interviewed twice. On one occassion, Alice Rivlin was described as an economist (CBS-Nov. 16, 1988) and twice as the ex- Congressional budget director (NBC-Nov. 12 and Nov. 16, 1988), which resulted in her being classified as a former government official for those appearances. The networks did not mention that Alice Rivlin is also associated with the Brookings Institution. Sheila Tate (NBC-May 9, 1988), a former Reagan aide, was the only other woman classified as a former government official. Linda DiVall was described as a "pollster" by the networks (ABC/CBS-September 28, 1987) and was therefore assigned to the "other" category by the coding for this study, as was one other woman. The networks did not report that Linda DiVall is a Republican pollster, whose clients included the National Republican Committee and Dole '88 campaign (Political Resources Directory, 1989).

Three women were classified as experts or consultants: Bassma Kadmani Darwish (ABC-Aug. 5, 1987), Ann Lewis (CBS-Aug. 14, 1987), and Connie Snapp (CBS-Jan. 18, 1988). Bassma Kadmani Darwish was described as a "Mideast expert," Ann Lewis as a "Democratic consultant," and Connie Snapp as an "image consultant." Dorothy Kearns Goodwin (CBS-Nov. 14, 1988) was billed as an "historian," while five other women were listed as spokespersons for centers, foundations and institutions.

THINK TANKS

The networks described 44 people as spokespersons from foundations, centers, or institutes. The 44 speakers came from 16 "think tanks", but six accounted for 34 of the 44 (i.e., 77.3 percent) appearances. The six think tanks that had more than one appearance are listed in Table 2.

[Insert Table 2 Here]

Ten foundations, centers and institutes had spokespersons appear only once. These foundations include the Joint Center for Political Studies, which is concerned with black issues; CATO Institute, a liberatarian think tank; Center for Strategic and International Studies; Conservative Causcus Foundation, which sponsors the Victory Over Communism Project; Institute for Government and Politics, which is sponsored by the rightest Free Congress Research and Education Foundation (Encyclopedia of Associations, p. 1453); and corporate-sponsored think tanks like the Petroleum Industry Research Foundation and the Employee Benefits Research Foundation. There were no appearances by spokespersons from liberal think tanks such as the Institute for Policy Studies (Dionne, 1989).

All of the think tanks listed in Table 2 except the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Council on Foreign Relations are based in Washington, DC, suggesting that the networks rely heavily on "beltway analysts" to shape the news. These beltway analysts are frequently former government officials who provide consultation to current officials. For example, Brookings' Stephen Hess was an appointee in the Eisenhower and Nixon administrations.

There is considerable overlap among beltway think tanks, as well as overlap with government. The Institute for International Economics' Fred Bergsten was a fellow with the Council of Foreign Relations during 1967-68; a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution during 1972-76; and a senior associate with the Carnegie Endowment during 1981 (Who's Who in America 45th ed., p. 238). In additon, he sits on the editorial board of Foreign Policy, which is published by the Carnegie Endowment. Even members of the conservative American Enterprise Institute are associated with other think tanks: Herbert Stein was with the Brookings Institution; Thomas W. Robinson was with the Council on Foreign Relations; and Dinesh D'Souza worked for the Heritage Foundation (AEI Sourcebook, 1989).

Of the 44 appearances by think tank spokespersons, 12 were described by the networks as coming from the American Enterprise Institute, 8 from the Brookings Institution, and 7 from the Carnegie Endowment. Of the 12 appearances by AEI spokespersons, 10 were by two individuals: William Schneider and Norman Ornstein. Only two other persons were identified as AEI representatives; Suzanne Garment ((CBS-Sept. 19, 1987) and Richard Perle (NBC-May 10, 1988). Garment was a Wall Street Journal editor and assistant to President Ford's U.N. ambassador, Daniel P. Moynihan. Perle was an assistant secretary of defense under President Reagan.

Of the 8 appearances attributed to Brookings spokespersons, three were made by Stephen Hess. John Steinbruner, who directs Brookings' foreign policy studies program, appeared twice on CBS (Nov. 12 and Nov. 15, 1988). Joshua Epstein (ABC-Aug. 13, 1987), a former Rand Corporation researcher; William Quandt (ABC-Nov. 15, 1988), a former Rand researcher and National Security Council staffer under Presidents Nixon and Carter;

and Yahya Sadowski (CBS-Sept. 28, 1987), a mideast specialist, made one appearance each as Brookings spokespersons.

Of the 7 appearances by persons described by the networks as Carnegie representatives, three were made by Peter Zimmerman, a physicist who specializes in defense issues and serves as an advisor to the U.S. START delegation. The other four Carnegie spokespersons appeared only once. However, there were three people who appeared on the networks who were Carnegie representatives, but were not described as such: Geoffrey Kemp, Dimitri Simes, and Charles Maynes. Geoffrey Kemp, who was a special assistant to President Reagan for national security affairs, was described by ABC (February 10, 1987) as a "former NSC staff member," not a Carnegie representative. Charles Maynes, a Democrat who worked in the U.S. State Department for presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Carter, was described as the editor of Foreign Policy rather than a Carnegie representative. For that reason, Maynes was classified as journalist using the coding categories employed in this study. Dimitri Simes, who appeared on CBS (Feb. 7, 1987) and NBC (Sept. 18, 1987) was described as a "Soviet expert" rather than a Carnegie spokesman. When the appearances by Kemp, Maynes, and Simes are added to those attributed to Carnegie spokespersons, the number of appearances by Carnegie representatives increases to 11, as shown in Table 3.

[Insert Table 3 Here]

American Enterprise Institute (AEI) spokespersons also made many more appearances than Table 2 implies. Norman Ornstein was described as a "political analyst" (e.g., CBS-Jan. 21, 1988) or "political scientist" (e.g., NBC-Sept. 14, 1987) on six occassions; William

Schneider was on three occassions described as an "analyst" (CBS-Sept. 15, 1987; ABC-Sept. 28, 1987) and "political scientist" (CBS-Feb. 7, 1987); John Makin, who writes a column for the rightist Washington Times, was described as a "political analyst" by NBC (May 7, 1988) rather than an AEI representative; and Frank Gaffney, Jr., a deputy assistant secretary of defense under President Reagan (1983-87), was described by NBC (May 17, 1988) as an "ex-arms negotiator" rather than AEI spokesperson. For that reason, Gaffney was classified as a former government official using this study's coding categories. When these appearances are added to those listed in Table 2, the number of appearances by AEI representatives increases to 23.

The same is true for Brookings Institution appearances. When Brookings associates who were described as "political analysts" or other titles are included, the number of Brookings appearances increases from 8 to 17. When the appearances by AEI, Brookings and Carnegie are combined, representatives of these think tanks accounted for 51 of the 260 appearances by news shapers. This constitutes about one-fifth (i.e., 19.6 percent) of all the appearances.

EXPERTS, ANALYSTS AND CONSULTANTS

People billed as "experts, analysts or consultants" appeared 70 times in the sampled newscasts (see Table 4). The 70 appearances were made by 45 people. Of the 45, 13 appeared more than once. The 13 accounted for 54.3 percent (i.e., 38 of 70) of the appearances, suggesting that the networks rely on a small number of "experts and analysts" to provide a majority of the background to the news. Of the 13 frequently-appearing analysts, only three (i.e., George Joffe, Dimitri Simes and Robert Hunter) commented on foreign affairs. The other 10 analysts and consultants who made multiple appearances discussed domestic affairs, including the presidential race.

[Insert Table 4 Here]

Within the category of "experts, analysts and consultants," the term "expert" was applied exclusively to individuals who discussed foreign policy issues. With one exception (CBS-September 22, 1987), the term "consultant" was used with speakers who provided background about domestic political issues. The term "analyst" was attached to speakers on foreign affairs and domestic policy with equal frequency.

When foreign affairs issues were discussed, the area of expertise was usually attached to the title: mideast expert (NBC-Aug.3, 1987), Soviet analyst (NBC-Sept. 14, 1987) or arms expert (CBS-Sept. 23, 1987). Only once was the term "consultant" used to describe a foreign affairs "news shaper." It was used to describe Fouad Ajami (CBS-September 22, 1987), who on every other appearance was described as a Johns Hopkins University professor (e.g., CBS-January 19 and 20, 1988).

Of the 70 appearances by experts, analysts and consultants, 37 concerned domestic affairs, 31 concerned foreign affairs, and two could not be categorized (see Table 4). The two discussed the threat to U.S. security posed by Japanese computer chip superiority (CBS-February 12, 1987) and the impact of foreign car manufacturers on the U.S. automobile industry (ABC-February 8, 1987).

The majority of the 31 appearances by foreign affairs experts were by non-U.S. citizens or U.S. citizens of foreign birth. These experts included Soviet official Gennady Gerasimov, who was described by ABC (August 7, 1987) as a "political analyst," German-born Helmut Sonnenfeldt (NBC-September 14, 1987), Soviet-born Dimitri Simes

(CBS-February 6, 1987; NBC-September 18, 1987), Hungarian-born Edward Luttwak (NBC-August 11, 1987), Middle Easterners Fouad Ajami (CBS-September 22, 1988) and Bassma Kadmani Darwish (ABC-August 5, 1987), and Britishers George Joffe (ABC-August 3 and 12, 1987) and Ronald Payne (CBS-February 4, 1988). CBS described Ronald Payne as a "terrorism expert," although Payne described himself as "a well-experienced hack [who] will go anywhere, and can avoid cliches" (Contemporary Authors Volumes 97-100, p. 427).

The foreign affairs experts spoke primarily on four areas: the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Mideast, terrorism, and military and arms issues, although these categories are not truly discrete. Persons described as "Mideast experts" commented on terrorism, and "military analysts" commented on the Soviet Union.

Appearances by news shapers who discussed the USSR were described as "Russian experts" (CBS-May 14, 1988), "Soviet analysts" (NBC-September 14, 1987) or "Soviet experts" (CBS-February 6, 1988). These experts primarily came from think tanks and universities: Peter Frank (ABC-May 7, 1988) is with the University of Essex, Marshall Goldman (CBS-May 14, 1988) teaches at Harvard, Jonathon Sanders (CBS-May 7, 1988) is at Columbia University, Helmut Sonnenfeldt (NBC-September 14, 1987) is with the Brookings Institution, and Dimitri Simes (CBS-February 6, 1988) is with the Carnegie Endowment. In 1985, Simes was a visiting professor at Columbia University. He and Sonnenfeldt previously taught at Johns Hopkins University.

The military experts included Edward Luttwak (NBC-August 11, 1987) of the Center for Strategic and International Studies; missile expert Stan Norris (May 17, 1988); and Anthony Sampson (CBS-September 23, 1987), a British journalist, who is contributing editor for Newsweek.

The term "political analyst" was reserved for speakers who commented on domestic issues. It was applied to American Enterprise Institute (AEI) economist John Makin (NBC-May 7, 1988), who discussed voting behavior; Stephen Hess (ABC-Nov. 13, 1988) of Brookings; former Nixon appointee Kevin Phillips (CBS-September 15, 1987); and AEI spokesman Norman Ornstein, who "shaped" a wide range of issues: federal pay raises (CBS-February 4, 1987), the economy (NBC-May 7, 1988), Democratic presidential candidate Richard Gephart (CBS-January 21, 1988), and the Reagan presidency (NBC-February 6, 1987). The networks made no mention of the Republican affiliations of these news shapers, or the conservative orientation of the American Enterprise Institute (Dionne, 1989), except in the case of Kevin Phillips. On two (NBC-January 19, and November 11, 1988) of his five appearances, Phillips was described as a "Republican political analyst."

The term "analyst" was was used almost exclusively by the networks to describe individuals with Republican affiliations or those affiliated with conservative think tanks, as is shown in Table 5. In only one appearance was Robert Squier described as an "analyst." In all other appearances, he was described as a "political consultant" (NBC-January 18, 1988) or "media consultant" (ABC-January 24, 1988; CBS-May 12, 1988). Squier is a Democrat who was director of TV and radio for the Democratic National Committee in 1968-69, and consultant to the Democratic National Committee and House Democratic Campaign Committee after that (Who's Who in America 43rd ed., p. 3106).

[Insert Table 5 Here]

When Democrats appeared on the networks as news shapers, they were rarely described as "political analysts." When Democrats like Ann Lewis (CBS-August 14, 1987), Harrison Hickman (CBS-August 14 and September 17, 1987), and David Sawyer (CBS-May 16, 1988) appeared on the networks, they were described as "consultants" or "Democratic consultants." David Garth was also described by CBS as a "political consultant" (January 26, 1988). Garth is sometimes described as a Democrat because of his work for New York City Mayor Ed Koch, but he also works with Republicans like Pennylvania Senator John Heinz (Who's Who in America 85th ed., p. 962). Because of this, Garth and was coded as "neither" a Democrat nor Republican in Table 5.

Democrats were not the only news shapers described as consultants. The term was applied to Republicans Richard Viguerie (ABC-January 25, 1988), former Reagan aide Ed Rollins (NBC-September 18, 1987; CBS-May 10, 1988), and Eddie Mahe, who was described as a "campaign consultant" during one appearance (ABC-November 13, 1988) and as "Republican consultant" during another (CBS-May 7, 1988). Mahe's appearance on CBS was the only time that the political affiliations of these consultants were disclosed to viewers. Finally, Table 5 shows that Republicans and individuals affiliated with conservative think tanks made over twice the number of appearances as individuals with Democratic affiliations. This was true across all networks.

JOURNALISTS

The 28 appearances by journalists were made by 22 people. All but two journalists appeared just once. The two journalists who made multiple appearances were Jack Germond and David Gergen. Jack Germond appeared twice and was described as a political columnist (CBS-January 17, 1988) and writer for the Baltimore Sun (ABC-January 25, 1988).

David Gergen appeared six times, which constituted 21.4 percent (i.e., 6 of 28) of all appearances by journalists. In each appearance, Gergen was described as with *U.S. New and World Report*. In none of the appearances was it disclosed that Gergen was assistant to President Reagan for Communications, director of White House Office of Communications for President Ford, and staff assistant and writer for Nixon (*Who's Who in America* 45th ed., p. 1113). No mention was made of Gergen's associations with the American Enterprise Institute as a resident fellow or editor of its journal, *Public Opinion*.

There were two appearances by *Time* magazine spokesmen. The remaining journalists can be classified as coming from "prestige" newspapers, foreign affairs journals, local media, conservative publications such as the *Washington Times* (ABC-September 27, 1987), and specialized publications such as *Investment* magazine (ABC-September 23, 1987). There were ten appearances by columnists and reporters from "prestige" newspapers such as the *New York Times* (ABC-September 27, 1987), *Washington Post* (ABC-August 3, 1987; CBS-January 24, 1988), *Los Angeles Times* (ABC-August 3, 1987), *Miami Herald* (CBS-May 14, 1988) and *Des Moines Register*. The appearances were by well-known writers like Hedrick Smith and David Broder.

The appearances by journalists from foreign affairs publications were by *Foreign Policy* editor Charles Maynes (ABC-January 15, 1988) and *Foreign Affairs* editor William Hyland (CBS-September 15, 1987). *Foreign Policy* is published by the Carnegie Endowment. *Foreign Affairs* is published by the Council on Foreign Relations.

Wesley Pruden (ABC-September 27, 1987), editor of the *Washington Times*, made one of two appearances by spokesmen from rightest publications. The other appearance was by Richard Viguerie, who was described as a spokesman for the Conservative Digest (ABC-August 12, 1987). Viguerie made two other network appearances, but was described as a "conservative analyst" (ABC-January 25, 1988) and a "consultant" (CBS-September 16, 1987) during these appearances, and was therefore placed in the category of "experts, analysts and consultants" for these appearances. There were no appearances by journalists from leftist publications such as the Nation or Mother Jones. Finally, only two appearances were made by representatives of local media. One appearance was by a reporter from an Iowa TV station (CBS-January 17, 1988); the other was by a reporter for the Savannah Morning News (CBS-November 9, 1988).

FORMER POLITICIANS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

There were 53 appearances by ex-government officials, former politicians and their aides among the 260 appearances by news shapers. The 53 does not include appearances by former officials who were described by the networks as journalists, analysts or think tank spokespersons. It includes only those described as former or ex-officials and a handful of well-known, former officials who needed no description: Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and John Ehrlichman.

Among the 53 appearances were three by individuals who were former campaign advisors, not former government officials. The three appearances were by Robert Beckel (CBS-January 22, 1988), Rick Ritter (CBS-January 17, 1988), and Adam Walinsky (NBC-September 17, 1987). Beckel was Walter Mondale's campaign advisor, Rick Ritter was described as an "ex-Hart" manager, and Adam Walinsky was speech writer for the Robert Kennedy. Each provided background and commentary on the

Democratic presidential race. Although coded as "former politicians," these individuals provided commentary that was similar to that provided by other persons whom the networks described as "consultants."

The other 50 appearances were made by 34 individuals. Fourteen of the 34 were former officials of the Reagan administration. The 14 individuals accounted for 22 of the 53 (i.e., 41.5 percent) appearances attributed to former politicians and government officials. The Reagan officials included ex-under secretary of Defense Donald Hicks (CBS-November 10, 1988), former deputy assistant secretary of Defense Douglas Feith (CBS-August 7, 1987), former National Security Council (NSC) member Norman Bailey (ABC-May 9, 1988), ex-Labor secretary Bill Brock (ABC and CBS-November 16, 1989), former assistant secretary of Defense Frank Gaffney (NBC-May 17, 1988), ex-under secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger (ABC-November 9, 1988), ex-White House spokesman Larry Speakes (CBS-January 24, 1988), former NSC staff member Geoffrey Kemp (ABC-February 10, 1988), and former Senator John Tower (ABC-August 3, 1987), who after retiring from the Senate served as an arms negotiator. All commented on controversial issues such as the Iran/Contra arms deal, the U.S.-U.S.S.R. arms negotiations, and the budget deficit. None were clearly identified by the networks as being former Reagan administration officials. They were described as a "former National Security staff member," "ex-undersecretary of State," or other title that did not include mention of the administration that they served.

Only four officials (i.e., Sheila Tate, Dana Rohrbacher, Gary McDowell and Ed Rollins) were clearly identified as having served in the Reagan administration. Sheila Tate (NBC-May 9, 1988) was described as an "ex-Reagan aide," Dana Rohrbacher (ABC-May 9, 1988) was described as as an "ex-Reagan speech writer," and Gary McDowell was described as an "ex-Justice Department official" (NBC-May 16, 1988) and Attorney General Meese's former speech writer (e.g., ABC and CBS May 16, 1988). Although Ed Rollins made six appearances where he was billed as a former government official (e.g., CBS-February 3, 1988; ABC-May 9, 1988; ABC-May 19, 1988), he was clearly identified as a former Reagan aide only once (CBS-May 9, 1988). Rollins appeared on four other occassions, but was either described as a "consultant" (e.g., CBS-May 10, 1988) or not given a title (e.g., ABC-August 3, 1987).

Eleven of the 53 appearances were by former members of the Carter administration. Three of the 11 were by Jimmy Carter (ABC and CBS September 22, 1987; CBS-November 10, 1988) and two were by his director of Central Intelligence, Stansfield Turner (CBS-Febraury 3, 1988; ABC-May 13, 1988). Stuart Eizenstat was described by the networks as a Carter policy "advisor." He made two appearances (CBS-January 19 and November 9, 1988). The other four appearances were by former Attorney General Griffin Bell (NBC-May 18, 1988), arms negotiator Paul Warnke (NBC-September 18, 1987), defense advisor Robert Komer (CBS-September 16, 1987), and Carter appointee William Oldaker (CBS-January 20, 1988), who chaired the Federal Election Commission. Oldaker commented on candidate Gary Hart's alleged violations of campaign financing laws.

Six other appearances were by former Democratic politicians. Former House speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill appeared twice (CBS-September 24, 1987; ABC November 9, 1988) and Stanley Brand (CBS-May 19, 1988), a former O'Neill aide who became Congressional counsel, appeared once. During two appearances, Alice Rivlin (NBC-November 12 and November 16, 1988) was described as the ex-Congressional budget director, so she was coded as a former government official for these appearances. Rivlin also worked for the Johnson administration. Finally, James Hamilton (NBC-February 1, 1988) appeared once. NBC described Hamilton as a "Watergate attorney," but he also served as an advisor to Senator Edmund Muskie, so he was classified as a Democrat.

The remaining former officials were with the Nixon and Ford administrations. The appearances included ones by well-known individuals such as former President Nixon (ABC-November 21, 1988), former Defense secretary James Schlesinger (ABC-September 18, 1987), and Watergate defendants John Dean (ABC-May 9, 1988) and John Ehrlichman (CBS-February 10, 1988), and lesser known persons such as ex-arms negotiator John Rhinelander (ABC-February 3 and 7, 1988), former State Department intelligence director Ray Cline (NBC-February 3, 1988), ex-CIA director William Colby (ABC-February 2, 1988) and ex-Solicitor General Philip Lacovara (NBC-January 22, 1988). When these and the appearances by former Reagan administration officials are combined, it shows that Republican officials accounted for 62.3 percent (i.e., 33 of 53) of the appearances by persons described as former politicians and officials. Twenty of the appearances (i.e., 37.7 percent) were by Democrats, and three of these were by consultants who were identified as aides or advisors to leading Democrats.

The 62.3 percent does not include appearances by former Reagan officials who were described as journalists (e.g., David Gergen), think tank scholars (e.g., Richard Perle), or consultants (e.g., Ed Rollins), nor does it include individuals described as "experts," "analysts" or "economists" who worked for other Republican and Democratic administrations, such as Charles Schultze, Robert Hunter, Helmut

Sonnenfeldt, William Hyland, Kevin Phillips or Stephen Hess. When these and other individuals who are former government officials are added to those discussed above, Republicans accounted for 68.3 percent (69 of 102) of the appearances by former government officials. This percentage excludes individuals such as Richard Viguerie and Edward Luttwak, who are openly partisan but have not been in government.

ACADEMICS

Forty appearances were by individuals who the networks described as political scientists, historians, sociologists, or professors. These individuals were classified as "academics," even though five had no university affiliations. The five were American Enterprise Institute spokesmen Norman Ornstein (NBC-September 14, 1987) and William Schneider (CBS-February 7, 1988), who were billed as "political scientists;" authors Stanley Karnow (CBS-November 11, 1988) and Frank Braynard (ABC-January 19, 1988), who were described as "historians" but are journalists by profession; and former Harvard University professor Doris Kearns Goodwin (CBS-November 14, 1988), who CBS called a "Kennedy historian." Although no longer teaching, Ornstein and Schneider are also former professors. Ornstein taught at Catholic University and Schneider at Harvard University.

Of the 35 appearances by "active" professors, 3 were from public, 27 from private universities, and 5 from foreign universities. Consequently, professors at private universities accounted for 77.1 percent of all appearances by university faculty. This percent excludes the appearances of former Harvard professors Goodwin and Schneider; appearances by other former professors; and appearances by academicians who were described as "analysts," "economists," or "former officials." If these appearances were included, the percent of appearances by professors from private universities would increase.

[Insert Table 6 Here]

Two of the three appearances by academicians at public institutions were by University of California professors (ABC-Novmber 11, 1988; NBC-May 19, 1988). The other appearance was by an Iowa State University professor (ABC-November 15, 1988), who discussed farm foreclosures. By contrast, there were seven appearances by Johns Hopkins professors and five by Harvard University professors. Five of the seven Johns Hopkins University appearances were by Fouad Ajami. All of his appearances (e.g., January 19, 1988; May 19, 1988; November 15, 1988) were on the CBS network, as was an appearance by another Johns Hopkins professor (CBS-February 4, 1987). The other Johns Hopkins appearance was on the NBC network (January 19, 1988).

Other private universities that had news shapers appear more than once were Columbia (CBS-September 23, 1987; CBS-May 15, 1988; NBC-August 3, 1987), Northwestern (NBC-September 22 and 23, 1987), American (ABC-September 18, 1987; NBC-August 14, 1987), and Drake (CBS-August 12, 1987; NBC-May 15, 1988) universities. The Drake professors discussed the Iowa presidential caucuses.

In addition to there being a pronounced bias against professors at public universities, there was also a strong bias against professors in the west. Of the 27 appearances by private university professors, 19 were from eastern universities such as Princeton (NBC-May 18, 1988), 6 were from midwestern universities such as Northwestern (NBC-September 22, 1987), and 2 were from western universities such as Stanford (CBS-February 11, 1988).

Table 7 contains a list of the news shapers who appeared more than twelve times on the network news during 1987 and 1988. These data were obtained during the second study described at the end of the "Methods" section of this report. Except for Harrison Hickman and Fouad Ajami, these frequently-appearing news shapers appeared on all three networks. Ajami, a Middle East consultant to CBS, made all 21 appearances on CBS. Five of Hickman's appearances were on NBC; the other 28 were on CBS. ABC never used Hickman as a news shaper.

By contrast, William Schneider made 18 appearances on ABC, 21 appearances on CBS, and 19 appearances on the NBC news. Ed Rollins appeared 11 times on ABC, 22 times on CBS, and 18 times on NBC. Of Gergen's 24 appearances, 8 were on ABC, 6 were on CBS, and 10 were on NBC. Stephen Hess appeared 13 times on ABC, but only 4 times on CBS and 2 times on NBC.

Norman Ornstein was the fourth most frequently appearing news shaper, logging 42 appearances. He was followed by Harrison Hickman and Bob Beckel, who made 33 and 27 appearances respectively. Of the news shapers listed in Table 7, only one -- Judith Kipper -- was female. Judith Kipper was a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute until 1986. She is currently with the Brookings Institution and the Council of Foreign Relations, where she is "Senior Program Associate for the Middle East Forum." During her 14 network appearances, Judith Kipper was identified 4 times as a Mideast expert or analyst, 7 times as a representative of the Brookings Institution, and 3 times as a Council on Foreign Relations spokesperson.

Judith Kipper was not the only news shaper who was identified by the networks in several different ways. William Schneider was described as a political scientist, political analyst, expert, and American Enterprise Institute spokesman. The American Enterprise Institute was never described during the newscasts as a conservative think tank. Harrison Hickman was described as a political analyst 3 times, a political consultant 2 times, a consultant 1 time, a pollster 2 times, a Democratic political consultant 6 times, a Democratic pollster 18 times, and a Simon pollster 1 time. Hickman was therefore identified as a Democrat in 25 of his 33 (i.e., 75.8 percent) appearances. By contrast, Kevin Phillips was described as a political analyst, consultant, or columnist 31 times, and a Republican or conservative analyst on just 12 occassions. His political orientation was therefore provided in only about one-fourth (i.e., 27.9 percent) of his appearances.

Based on the biographical information obtained from the secondary sources described in the "Methods" section of this study, the 16 news shapers listed in Table 7 were classified as conservative think tank spokespersons, former Republican officials or activists, Democratic consultants, people with ambiguous political affiliations, or university professors. Kevin Phillips, Stephen Hess, William Hyland and James Schlesinger, who were appointees in the Nixon administration, were categorized as Republicans. Richard Perle, Ed Rollins and David Gergen, who were members of the Reagan administration, were also coded as Republicans. Richard Viguerie, a fundraiser for numerous Republican candidates including Jesse Helms, Phil Crane and John Connally, was also classified as a Republican.

Only Harrison Hickman, Bob Beckel and Robert Squier were classified as Democrats. Hickman worked as a pollster for a number of

Democratic candidates; Bob Beckel was Walter Mondale's campaign advisor; and Robert Squier worked for the Hubert Humphrey and Jimmy Carter campaigns. None of the three ever held elective or appointive office. This was the opposite of the individuals classified as Republicans. All but Richard Viguerie were members of Republican administrations.

David Garth, who worked for Republicans John Heinz and John V. Lindsay and Democrat Ed Koch, was classified as having ambiguous political affiliations. Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins University was the only news shaper who was coded as a professor.

Judith Kipper, William Schneider and Norman Ornstein were coded as spokespersons for conservative think tanks. Although Judith Kipper is currently with the Brookings Institution, which is considered a centrist think tank (Dionne 1989), she was associated with the conservative American Enterprise Institute for 6 years. For that reason, she was grouped with Schneider and Ornstein in the conservative think tank classification.

When the political affiliations and appearances of the leading news shapers are tabulated, as is shown in Table 8, it is apparent that Republicans appear with much greater frequency than Democrats. Among the leading news shapers, 198 appearances were by Republicans, while only 78 appearances were by Democrats. When Republicans and conservative think tank speokespersons are combined, they account for 312 appearances. This is 4 times the appearances made by the Democratic consultants.

The same preponderance of Republicans and conservative think tank spokespersons is apparent when news shapers who appeared 12 or fewer times are analyzed. Dimitri Simes, an admitted political conservative, appeared on the networks 12 times. He appeared on ABC once, CBS 6 times, and NBC 5 times during 1987 and 1988. Simes is currently associated with the Carnegie Endowment, but was previously associated with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, another conservative think tank. Four individuals appeared ten times as news shapers: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Robert Kupperman, Robert Hunter, and Robert Legvold. All but Legvold are with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where cold warriors Brzezinski, Henry Kissinger and James Schlesinger are "senior counselors." Although Brzezinski and Hunter are former Democratic administration officials, they are currently affiliated with the openly conservative think tank. Robert Legvold is a Columbia University professor who who spent 6 years with the Council on Foreign Relations.

Brent Scowcroft, William Colby, George Carver and James David Barber made 9 appearances each on the networks news. Of the four, two (Scowcroft and Colby) were former Republican officials at the time of their appearances, one (i.e., Carver) was with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and one (i.e., Barber) was a university professor at a private institution. Colby and Carver were former C.I.A. officials. Of the four, only James David Barber is identified with the political left.

CONCLUSIONS

This study obtained results that are consistent with those of FAIR (1989) and Whitney, et. al. (1989). FAIR (1989) found that 89.7 percent of "Nightline" guests were male; only 10.3 percent were female. Whitney, et. al. (1989, p. 170) found "86.4 percent of...news sources were male and 13.6 perecnt to be female." This study also found substantial underrepresentation of women in the sample of news shapers: Only 6.2 perecnt of the appearances were by women.

Dominick (1977) found a geogrpaphic bias in network news coverage. Dominick (1977) found that two-thirds of the news stories concerned Washington, DC, California or New York. This study also found regional biases in the selection of news shapers. Of 27 appearances by U.S. academicians, 19 were from eastern universities, 7 were from the midwest and 4 were from California. All but three think tanks that had spokespersons appear were in the Washington, DC area. Two of the three that were not based in Washington, DC were based in New York City.

The sample study also found that a small number of individuals accounted for a large percentage of the news shaper appearances, as suggested by Gamarekian (1989). Gamarekian (1989) observed that the names of several individuals "can be found in [the] Rolodexes" of most Washington reporters. Of the 260 appearances of news shapers, 117 (i.e., 45 percent) were made by 34 individuals. Of the 34, 15 appeared three or more times. The 15 individuals accounted for 77 (i.e., 29.6 percent) of the 260 news shaper appearances.

The population study indicated that the frequently-appearing news shapers tended to be either former Republican officials or residents of conservative think tanks. The Democrats that did appear frequently were political consultants, not former policy makers. Moreover, when Democratic political consultants they were usually identified as partisans, while Republicans were not.

The majority of academicians who appeared as news shapers were from private, elite institutions such as Princeton, Harvard, Johns

Hopkins, and Columbia universities. The frequent appearances by these academicians cannot be attributed to the networks' having news crews stationed near the elite institutions, which Epstein (1974) and Dominick (1977) concluded was the reason for geographic biases in network news, because many public institutions are as close or closer to network news rooms than are private universities. The University of Maryland, City University of New York, and Rutgers University are as close to the network offices as any private universities.

The frequent appearances by professors at elite universities are also not attributable to the scholarly credentials of the academics who have been selected to shape the news. Fouad Ajami, the most frequently appearing academic news shaper, provided "expert" commentary on Iran, even though he is neither from nor written a book on the country.

The reason for the selection appears to be the networks' reliance on elites for shaping the news. Former government officials, prestige press journalists, and Washington think tank scholars are used extensively by the networks. Among think tanks, centrist and conservative ones are used exclusively. Scholars from the Institute for Policy Studies never appeared in the sample. Among former officials, Republicans were relied upon more than Democrats. Under 32 percent of the news shaper appearances were by former Democrats. Over two-thirds were Republicans. As a result of these selection procedures, the vast majority of news is "shaped" by individuals who have politically conservative viewpoints.

TABLE 1

News Shapers by Network and Category

	Think Tanks	Experts, Analysts, & Consultants	Journalists	Former Politicians & Officials	Economists	Academics	Others	TOTAL
ABC	14	17	13	20	5	8	4	81
CBS	21	36	9	19	7	19	4	115
NBC	9	17	6	14	4	13	1	64
TOTAL	44	70	28	53	16	40	9	260

TABLE 2

Attributed Appearances by Spokespersons from Thinktanks

	ABC	CBS	NBC	Totals
American Enterprise Institute	4	4	4	12
Brookings Institution	3	5	0	8
Carnegie Endowment	4	2	1	7
Heritage Foundation	0	2	1	3
Council on Foreign Relations	0	2	0	2
International Institute for Strategic Studies	1	1	0	2

TABLE 3

Actual and Attributed Appearances by Spokespersons from "Big Three" Think Tanks

	Attributed Appearances	Actual Appearances
Carnegie Endowment	7	11
Brookings Institution	8	17
American Enterprise Institute	12	23

TABLE 4

Appearances by Experts, Analysts and Consultants by Network and Topic

	Domestic	Foreign	Other	Total
ABC	10	6	1	17
CBS	20	15	1	36
NBC	7	10	0	17
Totals	37	31	2	70

TABLE 5

Appearances by Consultants and Analysts Who Discussed Domestic Issues *

	Consultants	Analysts	Totals*
Republicans/ Conservative Think tanks	5	18	23
Democrats	8	1	9
Both/ Indeterminate	2	1	3
Totals	15	20	35

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*Two appearances by "analysts" or "consultants" who discussed domestic issues of a nonpartisan nature are excluded from the above table. These were appearances by "retail analyst" Monroe Greenstein (CBS-May 20, 1988), who discussed consumer prices and the economy, and "security consultant" Jack McGeorge (CBS-August 14, 1987), who discussed air safety after President Reagan's helicopter had a near miss with a private plane.

TABLE 6

Academic Appearances by Network and Institutional Affiliation

	Public Universities	Private Universities	Foreign Universities	No University Affiliation	Totals
ABC	2	5	0	1	8
CBS	0	13	3	3	19
NBC	1	9	2	1	13
Totals	3	27	5	5	40

TABLE 7

The Leading News Shapers of 1987-88: Population Numbers

	1987	1988	Total
William Schneider	23	35	58
Ed Rollins	21	30	51
Kevin Phillips	16	27	43
Norman Ornstein	28	14	42
Harrison Hickman	9	24	33
Bob Beckel	4	23	27
David Gergen	15	9	24
Fouad Ajami	6	15	21
Stephen Hess	6	13	19
Robert Squier	8	10	18
Richard Viguerie	12	5	17
James Schlesinger	11	5	16
David Garth	7	8	15
William Hyland	8	6	14
Richard Perle	9	5	14
Judith Kipper	3	11	14
Totals	186	240	426

Table 8

Affiliations and Backgrounds of Leading News Shapers

	No. of Individuals	No. of Appearances
Conservative Think Tank Spokespersons	3	114
Republicans (consultants and ex-officials)	8	198
Democrats	3	78
Indeterminate/Ambiguous	1	15
University Professors	1	21
Totals	16	426

Journalism and Mass Communication Journal Reviewers:

Their Standards and Perceived Roles in the Research Process

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Journalism and Mass Communication Journal Reviewers: Their Standards and Perceived Roles in the Research Process

Abstract

The authors surveyed 215 manuscript reviewers from a purposive sample of 11 scholarly journals in mass communication, asking about standards used in reviewing, how well manuscripts meet those standards and perceptions of reviewers' role in the research process. Respondents placed the most weight on Creative Conceptual standards and the least on Contribution to the Professional Field. Yet most manuscripts they receive meet neither the conceptual nor the professional standard. Respondents see themselves more as gatekeepers than as agenda setters in the research process.

Journalism and Mass Communication Journal Reviewers: Their Standards and Perceived Roles in the Research Process

Research in journalism and mass communication is fundamental to the growth and scholarly well-being of the field. Teachers, scholars and professional practitioners all may benefit from quality investigations into appropriate aspects of communication: functions, objectives, uses, effects, consequences.

Because of their global importance, research and the research process are conceptually useful subjects for systematic analysis. Especially salient is the process that determines what research will reach those audiences: the reviewing, or jurying, process.

This paper focuses on one seqment of that process, i.e., the individuals who review manuscripts for scholarly journals in the field. It examines the standards they employ in reviewing manuscripts, their views of the purposes and audiences of research, and their perceptions of their roles in the research process.

These reviewers, members of various journals' editorial boards or boards of corresponding editors, make recommendations to journal editors on possible publication of manuscripts they are asked to evaluate.[1]

It is not surprising that some people have accorded considerable influence to these participants in the research process. For example, they have been called gatekeepers of the discipline, and have been granted roles in the tenure/promotion/merit thicket, making decisions about what topics, theories, methods and authors get published.

Indeed, one author, writing in The Chronicle of Higher Education claimed: "Publication is such a key ingredient in a successful academic career that...(manuscript) reviewers can be said to influence--however slightly and indirectly--who gets promoted, who gets grants, and who gets invited to speak at scholarly conferences."[2]

Ryan has pointed out that there has been a growing interest in the editorial reviewing process and that that research has been divided into two basic categories: evaluation procedures and evaluation criteria.[3]

This paper deals in part with the latter topic, reviewers' evaluation standards and how well they think those standards have been met. It also analyzes reviewers' perceptions of their role in the research process, especially as those perceptions relate to agenda-setting.

Literature Review

Although there is a growing body of literature in mass communication on research productivity and organizational conduciveness to productivity, and although the review process has received considerable attention in other academic disciplines, only one study appears to deal with the process of reviewing in mass communication.[4]

Ryan surveyed 163 journal referees and 155 journalism and mass communication faculty members regarding reviewing procedures and criteria. He found that procedures considered most important were author anonymity, supplementation of manuscript critiques with written suggestions, and awareness of consequences of reviews on authors' careers.

The most important criteria, Ryan wrote, were clear presentation of results, contribution to knowledge, sound execution of research, results justifying conclusions, and the theoretical importance of the research.[5]

Ryan, however, did not look at how well manuscript reviewers thought those criteria were met or the reviewers' perception of their role in the research process. He did note the importance of examining the reviewing process. Journal referees, he said, may have an effect on the "speed and direction of a discipline's development...(or on) individual scholars' careers."[6]

Other than the Ryan study, the first work on research in journalism and mass communication appears to be a 1973 article by Cole and Bowers that examined the research productivity of faculties of U.S. schools of journalism. The authors reported that a relatively few schools dominated the six journals they analyzed,[7] suggesting that conditions for research are greatly enhanced at a few select schools, and that such schools seem to attract "'grouping(s)' of outstanding researchers."[8]

Other researchers who followed up on the issue of productivity included Soley and Reid,[9] Vincent,[10] and King and Baran.[11] Schweitzer, in 1988, published a list of the 30 most productive schools and the 50 most productive researchers in the field of mass communication, at least based on his definitions and journals selected for examination.[12]

In the area of agenda-setting, most studies have dealt with news media and issue salience in areas such as politics. McCombs and Shaw, for example, in their ground-breaking North Carolina study, concentrated on salience of socio-political issues among news consumers.[13] A number of other scholars also have found evidence of agenda-setting effects among mass media users.[14]

Although Ryan suggested a possible agenda-setting effect in the research process, no one appears to have studied possible agenda-setting in that process. A section of this study, therefore, systematically examines the possibility that manuscript reviewers perceive themselves as setting a research agenda, with possible impacts on topics, theoretical paradigms, and methods included in scholarly publications.

Research Questions

Out of the literature and the goals of the authors, the following research questions were developed:

What standards are most important to manuscript reviewers in determining the quality of the research articles they review?

How well do reviewers say the articles they review meet those standards?

Do reviewers' responses vary according to their educational or professional backgrounds, publication records, research output of the school in which they work, or by demographics?

What do reviewers see as the purpose and the audience of the research they evaluate?

Based on their responses to the above questions, how do manuscript reviewers perceive their role in the research process?

Method

A seven-page questionnaire was mailed to persons identified as reviewers for 11 juried publications in journalism and mass communication in February 1989.[15]

Purposively selected to represent the broad spectrum of research in journalism and mass communication, the publications were: *American Journalism*, *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *Journalism History*, *Journalism Monographs*, *Journalism Quarterly*, *Mass Comm Review*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, and *Public Relations Review*.

Reviewers' names for each publication were taken from the last issue of each journal published in 1988. That census yielded 645 names. As in Ryan's study, people affiliated with institutions outside the

United States were excluded, leaving a total of 597 names.[16] One hundred individuals were found to review for more than one journal, however, reducing the population to 497 names. Addresses for seven persons were not obtainable, leaving the final number at 490.

Respondents were asked to rate 11 attributes of research in terms of their importance as standards for determining the quality of research articles. A 5-point scale was used, with 5 meaning Very Important and 1 meaning Not At All Important. The standards were: Appeal of Subject To You, Conceptualization, Conclusions Based on Evidence/Data, Contribution to Professional Field, Contribution to Scholarly Field, Grammar/Spelling/Punctuation, Literature Review, Measurement Validity/Method, Presentation of Evidence/Data, Statement of Problem, and Timeliness of Topic.[17]

Two independent variables were constructed for use in analysis: High Research Output and Low Research Output. They were intended to measure the research productivity of the program from which the respondent received his or her terminal degree and the research output of the program in which the respondent now teaches.

The authors used the studies by Cole and Bowers and by Schweitzer to determine whether a program would be listed as High Output or Low Output. The Cole and Bowers study examined research productivity from 1961 to 1972 and the Schweitzer article studied research productivity from 1980 to 1985 in nine journals. Although the publications used in the two studies were not identical, there was reasonable agreement between the two lists of productive universities. Of the 25 programs listed in the Cole and Bowers article, 13 made Schweitzer's list.[18]

Other questions included items on audience, purpose of research, role of the reviewer, and demographic questions.

Results

The Respondents:

Some 230 questionnaires (47%) were returned; 215 were usable, for a final return of 44%.[19]

The typical manuscript reviewer for the journals examined is a 46-year-old white male with a doctorate in communication,[20] who holds senior rank with tenure, has been teaching for about 15 years and has a strong publication record.

As Table I shows, he received the terminal degree from a university that emphasized publication (High Output) and now works at a university where the faculty are active publishers of scholarly articles.

Table I about here

The typical reviewer has been doing so for about nine years and reviews an average of four to six manuscripts a year. He has an average of about five years of professional experience.

Of the 215 respondents, 61 review for one journal, 59 for two, 35 for three, and 58 for four or more.[21] The reviewers also are active in evaluating papers for scholarly and professional conventions. More than 82% said they had done so in the past five years.[22]

Research Question 1: Reviewers' Standards

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 11 common standards relating to the quality of the manuscripts they review.

Table II indicates that, as in Ryan's study, three of the standards were rated very high: Conclusion Based on Evidence, Conceptualization, and Contribution to the Scholarly Field. Three others were rated only slightly less important: Clear Presentation of Evidence/Data, Statement of the Research Problem, and Measurement Validity/Method.

Table II about here

Conversely, the three standards respondents rated lowest in terms of their importance were Grammar/Spelling/Punctuation, Timeliness of Topic, and Appeal of Subject Matter to the individual reviewer.

Research Question 2: How Well Standards Are Met

Reviewers then were asked to rate the same standards in terms of how well manuscripts they had reviewed met those standards.

Reviewers rated them highest in Grammar/Spelling/Punctuation, Literature Review, and Appeal of Subject Matter to the reviewer. They rated manuscripts lowest in terms of Measurement Validity/Method, Conceptualization, and Contribution to Scholarly or Professional fields.

Overall, there were striking differences between reviewers' perceptions of the importance of standards and how well they think those standards are met. Kendall's Tau rank-order correlation on standards versus how well those standards were met was negative (-.273) and nonsignificant.[23]

As Table II also shows, the major differences involved the three standards ranked highest, Conclusion Based on Evidence, Conceptualization, and Contribution to Scholarly Field and three standards ranked much lower, Literature Review, Grammar/Spelling/Punctuation, and Appeal of Subject Matter.

The first three standards were ranked sixth, tenth and eleventh, respectively, in terms of how well manuscripts met those criteria. The second group of standards, ranked sixth, eighth and eleventh in terms of importance, were ranked second, first and third in terms of how well they were met. So the most important standards to reviewers are the least well met, and the least important standards are the best met.

Separate factor analyses were performed on the standards and how well those standards were met.[24] The differences in factor structures for these two tests suggest that reviewers view the standards differently when asked about the abstract importance of the standards as opposed to the actual application of those standards when reviewing manuscripts.

Table III shows three factors for standards, in terms of their importance to reviewers. The authors named these Expected Components, Irrelevant Components and Big Picture Components.

Table III about here

Factor I, Expected Components, included the basic sections of a scholarly research report as well as mechanical details such as grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Factor II, Irrelevant Components, were Timeliness of Topic and Contribution to Professional Field. Conceptualization of Problem loaded negatively on this factor, suggesting that reviewers see a large dichotomy between conceptual or theoretical work on the one hand, and professionally oriented research on the other.

Factor III, Big Picture Components, were Contribution to the Scholarly Field and Appeal of Subject Matter, which loaded negatively. This suggests that reviewers, in looking at the larger picture, place more weight on the criterion of advancing the discipline as opposed to any personal research interests they may have. This also is evident in the rankings of research standards in Table II.

Table IV shows four factors for how reviewers think manuscripts meet the standards. The factor structure seems to show that, when reviewers actually apply the standards to manuscripts they review, they impose a different set of expectations.

Table IV about here

Factor I, Creative Conceptual Components, includes standards involving original thought on the part of researchers. Those include Conceptualization, Conclusion Based on Evidence, Contribution to the Scholarly Field, Presentation of Evidence, and Statement of the Problem. In contrast to the rankings in Table II, most of these standards are ranked lowest in terms of how often they are met.

Factor II, Tangential Components, includes Appeal of the Subject Matter, Grammar/Spelling/Punctuation, and Timeliness. These standards are ranked high in terms of how often they are met, but low in terms of their importance.

Factor III, Routine Components, includes Literature Review and Measurement Validity/Methodology. Both of these are important to the research process, but tend to be viewed by reviewers as somewhat mechanical. They are sections that one may do poorly but not sections that bring distinction to a paper even if done exceptionally well.

Factor IV, Irrelevant Components, involves only one standard, Contribution to the Professional Field. The low ranking for this standard and the statistical isolation in the factor analysis suggests that reviewers do not see it as particularly relevant as a criterion in the review process.

Research Question 3: Differences Among Groups

For the most part, there was little difference in the way reviewers rated research standards applied to the manuscripts they review or in how the manuscripts met those standards.

Rank order correlations were run on several variables to determine if there were differences in the ways various groups rated the standards. The variables examined were gender, age, article publication record, paper presentation record, graduate major of reviewer, research output of the institution from which he/she received the terminal degree, research output of the program in which they now work, amount of professional experience, educators vs. professional practitioners, and the reviewer's perception of their role in the research process.

Most of the correlations on the importance of standards were strong (ranging from .67 to .96) and all were statistically significant at the .05 level or better.

There were two weaker correlations. Although only seven of the respondents were professional practitioners, the rank-order correlation between their and faculty members' ratings was markedly lower than the above correlations (.49, $p<.05$). The major difference seemed to center on the perceived audience. Faculty members ranked Contribution to Professional Field ninth out of 11 standards and professionals ranked it second. Faculty also ranked Contribution to Scholarly Field third, while professionals ranked it seventh. Interestingly, both groups ranked Conclusion Based on Evidence first and Appeal of Subject last.

A non-significant negative correlation (-.018) was found between the rankings of respondents who received their terminal degrees from High Output programs and those who received their terminal degrees from Low Output programs. It should be noted, however, that only five respondents were in the latter category. Major differences were found in their rankings. High Output respondents ranked Contribution to Professional Field ninth and Timeliness tenth, whereas Low Output respondents ranked Contribution to Professional Field first and Timeliness third.

High Output respondents also ranked Conclusion Based on Evidence first and Conceptualization second, while Low Output respondents ranked those standards seventh and eighth, respectively. There also were minor differences in rankings for almost all other standards, with the exception of Presentation of Evidence which both groups ranked fourth and Appeal of Subject, which both groups ranked last.

Rank-order correlations also were performed on these variables in terms of how well manuscripts met the standards. Correlations were moderate to strong (.53 to .89) and all were statistically significant.

The two weakest correlations were between academics and professionals (.53) and between men and women (.53).

Faculty ranked Literature Review second and Presentation of Evidence fourth, while professionals ranked them seventh and ninth, respectively. Women ranked Appeal of Subject Mater ninth; men ranked it third.

Research Question 4: Purposes and Audiences

Although the reviewers represented a variety of journals focusing on different topics and methodological approaches, the authors were interested in respondents' views of the purpose of research and the audience(s) the respondents considered as they reviewed manuscripts.

More than 80 percent (about 40 percent each) said the purpose of research was either to advance knowledge or to build theory. While there was some apparent overlap in those responses, comments written on the questionnaire indicated respondents had different ideas in mind.

On the one hand, some respondents felt research in journalism and mass communication should "contribute to the advancement of knowledge for scholars." On the other hand, some said research should "help build theoretical concepts" in the field.

About 12 percent said research should serve both academics and professionals. One respondent said research should "advance knowledge about the field for scholars and professionals." About 6 percent said research should enhance professionalism among practitioners.

In terms of the audience they have in mind when reviewing manuscripts, more than 95 percent said scholars and/or educators. Only about 4 percent said they had professional practitioners in mind.

Research Question 5: Reviewers' Perceptions of Role

Reviewers were asked how much influence they thought they had in setting an agenda in journalism and mass communication research.

Only about 36 percent (n=78) said they had some or a great deal of influence in setting an agenda. Asked to explain their response, some reviewers said they tended to see themselves more as gatekeepers in the process. Others said the real agenda setters were the journal editors. One reviewer, who said he thought he had a great deal of influence, responded, "My comments influence the editor, the other reviewers, and, hopefully, the author(s)."

Among those reviewers who said they had little if any influence, one respondent noted: "(There are) too many journals; too many reviewers; any one reviewer simply will not have much of an impact." Several saw strength in numbers, though. "Collectively, we have tremendous influence," one wrote. And, another said, "Reviewers have some influence, but not much given the large number of manuscripts...and the large number of reviewers. Each one has some influence, but not a lot. As a group, they have a great deal of influence."

A number of respondents said they acted as research gatekeepers. As one said, "Reviewers can be gatekeepers to keep poor research from being published." Another said, "Referees are reactive, not proactive. We only respond to what's submitted and act as a final gatekeeper."

Many reviewers also said the real agenda setters are journal editors. Said one respondent, "Editors who assign reviewers are the power brokers. They know how the given reviewer will react to the submission." Another noted, "Journal editors usually are predisposed as to what they want the direction of their publications to be."

Another responded similarly: "The editors send you only those manuscripts which they judge to be 'on your agenda' in the first place." And, another stated bluntly, "I review what I'm sent. I have no input into topics I feel should be researched."

Finally, a few respondents said the true agenda setters are "faculty at large Ph.D. programs." As one respondent stated the case:

> An individual reviewer...has little say in how a field develops. However, clusters of reviewers can have a say. I am a bit concerned that certain dominant training patterns in Ph.D. programs create reviewers who tend to "look alike." Important topics or research techniques can be excluded because of these training patterns. It is important that minority approaches and views are represented. I don't think we do a terrific job of that....Take journalism. Several of us [reviewers] review manuscripts for several journals; several of us attended the same schools; several of us have the same professional and personal backgrounds. Too much of that is simply not healthy.[25]

Discussion

Perhaps the most important finding of this study is that, overall, journal manuscript reviewers believe the primary purpose of academic publication should be to advance conceptual models and to make a contribution to the scholarly, rather than the professional, field.

This may be related to our sample of journals, representing, as they do, a wide variety of interests, methodologies, and goals. However, there is considerable overlap among journals and reviewers: 152 of the respondents review for more than one scholarly journal.

Rank-order correlations also indicate the emphasis on conceptualization held even when controlling for several demographic and academic variables. The only two exceptions were the five reviewers who received their terminal degrees from Low Output programs and the seven reviewers currently working as professional practitioners. But these numbers are small, and, overall, the correlations support the major finding.

At the same time, the rankings of how well research standards are met indicate that reviewers do not feel this conceptual contribution is being made by most articles they review. Nor do they believe the articles are making a professional contribution. Contribution to Scholarly Field and Conceptualization were ranked ninth and tenth, respectively. Contribution to Professional Field was ranked eleventh.

Although the "chi squares" may have won the 25-year-old battle with "green eye shades," as Lovell has argued,[26] the victory does indeed seem hollow, though perhaps not for the reasons he advances. The high rankings for Literature Review and Presentation of Evidence in terms of standards met (second and fourth, respectively) show that the social science research model mechanically is being used well. But, the reviewers are indicating the research itself is largely unimportant, advancing neither theoretical nor professional knowledge.

Although making scholarly journals professionally relevant has been discussed, reviewers clearly do not see this as a primary goal. They also do not seem to think the major job of journals, promoting knowledge or theory, is particularly well served in the manuscripts they review.

The change in the factor structure from the first analysis, of standards viewed in the abstract, to the second analysis, of how well those same standards are met, also supports this view. The second factor analysis (Table IV), combined with the ratings in Table II, suggests reviewers place most weight on, and are least satisfied with, the creative and conceptual aspects of the research they review--those aspects that involve author originality and genuine theoretical significance.

This finding, paired with the low rating and statistical isolation of Contribution to Professional Field, indicates researchers who hope to successfully navigate the shoals of peer review must pay particular attention to where their work fits in the larger conceptual framework. Contribution to Professional Field may be commendable but clearly is viewed as secondary. As several respondents noted, such professional contributions should be in publications such as *The Quill*, *Editor and Publisher* and *Advertising Age*, which have professional orientations.

On the other hand, the low ratings for how well the items comprising the Creative Conceptual factor actually are met also suggest that reviewers think most research they see is inadequately conceptualized and insufficiently integrated into a larger theoretical perspective. Adding support for this interpretation is respondents' view of the purpose of research. Building theory takes precedence over building professional knowledge or advancing practical professionalism.

And, more than 95 percent of the respondents said when they review manuscripts the primary audience they have in mind is scholars or educators, not professional practitioners.

As for reviewers' perceptions of their role in the research process, they see themselves more as gatekeepers than agenda setters. Even in this gatekeeping role, however, they appear to place emphasis on "quality" manuscripts, with quality being related more to conceptualization and scholarly contribution than to professional contribution.

Thus, although the reviewers do not perceive themselves as agenda setters, there still appears to be an agenda they may be communicating to authors and journal editors, perhaps indirectly. Indeed, the role of the journal editors in setting a research agenda may be more important and should be investigated, as a number of respondents suggested.

In the end, it seems reviewers prefer manuscripts that strive to develop a coherent body of knowledge about mass communication, rather than those of narrow professional or theoretical scope. Questions still exist. Given their dissatisfaction with the conceptual level of manuscripts they review, what precisely are respondents looking for in terms of contributions to scholarship? If scholarly journals in the field are not going to be written for a professional audience, how can scholars best communicate findings relevant to this audience? And, what should be the ultimate purpose of research in mass communication: building comprehensive conceptual models or addressing smaller, more immediate questions deemed important by professionals?

Table I

Selected Demographics of JMC Manuscript Reviewers in 1988

Variable	Category	Pct.	(N)
Gender	Male	82.7	(172)
	Female	17.3	(36)
Age	Under 40	20.0	(41)
	40 to 49	45.9	(94)
	50 to 59	26.8	(55)
	60 and over	7.3	(15)
Highest Degree	Doctorate	94.3	(200)
	Masters	4.7	(10)
	Bachelors	1.0	(2)
When Highest Degree Received	Before 1960	3.0	(6)
	1960s	19.7	(40)
	1970s	56.2	(114)
	1980s	21.2	(43)
University Where Terminal Degree Received	High Output	85.1	(172)[27]
	Low Output	14.9	(30)
University Where Employed in 1988	High Output	31.8	(67)
	Low Output	48.8	(103)
	Non-JMC Dept.	19.4	(41)

Table II

How Respondents Rated Selected Manuscript Reviewing Standards (5=Very Important; 1=Not At All Important)

Standard	Standard's Importance Mean (Rank)	How Well Standard Met Mean (Rank)
Conclusion based on evidence	4.56 (1)	3.08 (6)
Conceptualization	4.52 (2)	2.85 (10)
Contribution to scholarly field	4.43 (3)	2.92 (9)
Presentation of evidence/data	4.19 (4)	3.24 (4)
Statement of the problem	4.08 (5)	3.10 (5)
Measurement validity/Method	3.97 (6)	3.04 (8)
Literature Review	3.51 (7)	3.43 (2)
Contribution to professional field	3.32 (8)	2.58 (11)
Grammar, spelling, punctuation	3.29 (9)	3.48 (1)
Timeliness of topic	2.95 (10)	3.05 (7)
Appeal of subject to reviewer	2.33 (11)	3.29 (3)

Kendall's Tau = -.273

p=n.s.

Table III

Factor Analysis on 11 Standards Rated in Terms of Importance

Standards	Expected Factor 1	Irrelevant Factor 2	Big Picture Factor 3
Conclusion based on evidence	.4752	-.2020	.2288
Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling	.5799	.1658	-.2929
Literature Review	.6042	.0491	.0976
Measurement Validity/Method	.5217	.0828	.4176
Presentation of Evidence	.7153	.0497	.1226
Statement of the Problem	.7393	-.1014	-.0560
Conceptualization	.2925	-.5349	.2122
Contribution to Profession	.0049	.8260	.2505
Timeliness	.3236	.6779	-.2209
Appeal of Subject To You	.0087	.3463	-.6931
Contribution to Scholarly Field	.0960	.1067	.6861
Eigenvalue	2.55	1.83	1.18
Percent of Variance Explained	23.2	16.6	10.7

SPSS-X Principal Components Method, Varimax Orthogonal Rotation

Table IV

Factor Analysis on How Well 11 Standards Are Met

Standard	Creative Conceptual Factor 1	Tangential Factor 2	Routine Factor 3	Irrelevant Factor 4
Conceptualization	.7731	.1904	-.1223	-.0182
Conclusion based on Evidence	.7429	.0264	.1290	.1037
Contribution to Scholarly Field	.6176	-.0361	.0927	.4252
Presentation of Evidence	.5587	-.2434	.4437	.0593
Statement of Problem	.6365	.1249	.1479	-.0098
Appeal of Subject	.1513	.7895	-.0989	-.1088
Grammar/Punctuation	.1553	.5392	.3923	-.0798
Timeliness	-.0892	.6773	.0852	.4312
Literature Review	.0038	.2583	.6644	.0163
Measurement/Method	.1591	-.1120	.7906	.0216
Contribution to Professional Field	.1426	.0022	-.0132	.9114
Eigenvalue	2.82	1.51	1.26	1.05
Percent of Variance	25.6	13.7	11.5	9.6

SPSS-X Principal Components Method, Varimax Orthogonal Rotation

Endnotes

(1)As opposed to journals in a number of other fields, scholarly publications in journalism and mass communication use a blind review process. Reviewers do not know who wrote the manuscript they are reviewing and vice versa. The intent is to remove any prestige bias or other possible subjective judgments.

(2)Ellen K. Coughlin, "Concerns About Fraud, Editorial Bias Prompt Scrutiny of Journal Practices," The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 15, 1989, p. A4.

(3)Michael Ryan, "Evaluating Scholarly Manuscripts in Journalism and Communications," Journalism Quarterly, 59:273-285 (Summer 1982).

(4)The concern with the reviewing process, standards invoked, acceptance rates, and other similar topics has been addressed in other fields for a number of years. See, e.g., Carol C. McDonough, "Manuscript Submission Patterns Among Economic Journals," American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 36:433-436 (October 1970); Donald R. Atkinson, et. al., "Statistical Significance, Reviewer Evaluations, and the Scientific Process: Is There a (Statistically) Significant Relationship?" Journal of Counseling Psychology, 29:189-194 (1982); Patrick H. Munley, Bruce Sharkin and Charles J. Gelso, "Reviewer Ratings and Agreement on Manuscripts Reviewed for the Journal of Counseling Psychology, Journal of Counseling Psychology, 35:198-202 (1988); Grover J. Whitehurst, "Interrater Agreement for Journal Manuscript Reviews," American Psychologist, 39:22-28 (January 1984); Lovell L. Hargens, "Scholarly Consensus and Journal Rejection Rates," American Sociological Review, 53:139-151 (February 1988); Diana Crane, "The Gatekeepers of Science: Social Factors Affecting the Selection of Articles for Scientific Journals," American Sociologist, 2:195-201 (1967).

(5)Ryan, p. 273.

(6)Ibid.

(7)Richard R. Cole and Thomas A. Bowers, "Research Article Productivity of U.S. Journalism Faculties," Journalism Quarterly, 50:246-54, (Summer 1973). Journals studied were Journalism Quarterly, Public Opinion Quarterly, Journal of Broadcasting, Journal of Communication, Gazette, and Journalism Monographs.

(8)Cole and Bowers, p. 254.

(9)Lawrence C. Soley and Leonard N. Reid, "Advertising Article Productivity Of the U.S. Academic Community," Journalism Quarterly, 60:464-69, 542 (Winter 1983).

(10)Richard C. Vincent, "Broadcast Research Productivity of U.S. Communications Programs," Journalism Quarterly, 61:841-46 (Winter 1984).

(11)Robert D. King and Stanley J. Baran, "An Investigation of the

Quantity of Articles Produced in Mass Communication by Institutions: 1970-1979," *Bulletin of Association for Communication Administration*, 37:40-48 (August 1981). The authors focused on only five journals and one of them was outside the normal definition of journalism and mass communication (*Educational Communication & Technology*).

(12)John C. Schweitzer, "Research Article Productivity by Mass Communication Scholars," *Journalism Quarterly*, 65:479-484 (Summer 1988). Schweitzer and Bradley S. Greenberg build upon this article in a later piece, "'Mass Communication Scholars' Revisited and Revised," *Journalism Quarterly*, 66:473-475 (Summer 1989).

(13)Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, ~~36:176-187~~ (Summer 1972).

(14)For other examples of research involving agenda-setting, see, David H. Weaver, Doris A. Graber, Maxwell E. McCombs, and Chaim H. Eyal, *Media Agenda-Setting in a Presidential Election: Issues, Images and Interests* (New York: Praeger, 1981); Donald L. Shaw and Maxwell E. McCombs, *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press* (St. Paul, Minn.: West, 1977); James P. Winter and Chaim H. Eyal, "Agenda Setting for the Civil Rights Issue," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45:376-383 (1981); Gerald C. Stone and Maxwell E. McCombs, "Tracing the Time Lag in Agenda-Setting," *Journalism Quarterly*, 58:51-55 (Spring 1981); Roy L. Behr and Shanto Iyengar, "Television News, Real-World Cues, and Changes in the Public Agenda," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 49:38-57 (1985); Michael B. Salwen, "The Effects of Accumulation of Coverage on Issue Salience in Agenda-Setting," *Journalism Quarterly*, 65:100-106 (Spring 1988); and Howard Eaton Jr., "Agenda-Setting With Bi-Weekly Data on Content of Three National Media," *Journalism Quarterly*, 66:942-48, 959 (Winter 1989).

(15)The definition of journalism and mass communication included print journalism, public relations, advertising, and broadcast and electronic media.

(16)Ryan, p. 276.

(17)The standards, or criteria, were drawn in part from Ryan, pp. 280-82, and from manuscript review forms used by several of the journals in the study.

(18)Schools on both lists were: Wisconsin, North Carolina, Minnesota, Michigan State, Southern Illinois, Washington, Ohio University, Syracuse, Maryland, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Penn State.

(19)The return from individual journals ranged from 26% to 66%. For each journal, the return percentage was: *Journalism Quarterly*, 58%; *Newspaper Research Journal*, 66%; *Journal of Communication*, 26%; *Public Relations Review*, 53%; *Mass Comm Review*, 50%; *Journal of Advertising*, 40%; *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 59%; *Journalism Monographs*, 49%; Journalism History, 42%; American *Journalism*, 40%; and *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 32%. Interestingly, a number of individuals listed as reviewers for *Journal of Communication* responded that they did not review for that publication, contributing, perhaps, to the low response rate for that journal.

(20)Communication is defined generically in this paper and means any program involving mass communication, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, or advertising.

(21)Two respondents did not answer this question. And, many of the journals mentioned by respondents were not among the 11 used in this study (for example, *Communication Research*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and *Journal of Marketing Research*). In addition, a number of respondents said they reviewed for one or more of the 11 journals, but were not included in the journal's list of reviewers. Further, some persons listed as reviewers said they did not review for that journal.

(22)A complete demographic description of the reviewers is in Fredric F. Endres and Stanley T. Wearden, "JMC Journal Reviewers: A Demographic Portrait," accepted for publication in *Journalism Educator*.

(23)With Kendall's Tau, a correlation near zero means that the rankings are not in agreement, but the disagreement is not entirely inverse. Kendall's Tau was used instead of Spearman's rank order correlation because while "Spearman's R from a sample has a rather artificial interpretation...the interpretation of the obtained value of Tau is quite straightforward." Tau may be viewed as the probability that any standard paired across groups will be rated the same. See Robert L. Winkler and William L. Hays, *Statistics: Probability, Inference and Decision* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975, (2nd. ed.), pp. 871-74.

(24)SPSS-X principal components method, orthogonal varimax rotation.

(25)For a fuller discussion of this point of view, see Endres and Wearden, "JMC Journal Reviewers: A Demographic Portrait," a ms. accepted for publication in *Journalism Educator*.

(26)Ron Lovell, "Triumph of the Chi-squares: It's a hollow victory," *The Quill*, 75:22-24 (October 1987).

(27)High and Low Output institutions were based on inclusion or omission from the lists in Cole and Bowers' or Schweitzer's studies.

Celebrity Advertising: Perception, Persuasion and Processing

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Presented at the 73rd Annual Conference of the AEJMC,
Advertising Research Division, at Minneapolis, August 1990.

Celebrity Advertising: Perception, Persuasion and Processing

One of the common strategies in advertising today is the use of celebrities. Large sums of monies are paid to celebrity-stars to appear in ads and endorse products. Celebrities are currently advertising all kinds of products, ranging from beer and sodas to automobiles and insurance, cosmetics, over the counter drugs, and even foods like breakfast cereals, coffee, yogurt, and cookies.

A celebrity is defined as a person widely known to the public for accomplishments in domains unrelated to the advertising product class (Friedman, Termini, & Washington, 1977). Among the most used celebrities in ads are sports figures, and movie and television stars.

What effects do ads with celebrities have on consumer-viewers? Do they persuade more than noncelebrity ads? If so, how do they work? In the present study, we have addressed these questions. We have studied consumer perception of celebrity sources in ads, the extent to which they are persuasive, and finally, tried to explain the psychological processing of such ads. The viability of the cognitive response approach was explored in this context. It appears that the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM, Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), derived from the cognitive response approach, should have some utility in explaining celebrity advertising.

Celebrity endorsers are considered to be highly dynamic with attractive and engaging personal qualities (Atkin & Block, 1983). This, it appeared, could affect, among other things, the perception of trustworthiness, and the mode of information processing of the celebrity ad, as well as the affective responses to it. A famous star endorsing a product may influence viewers to believe the claims made about the product and/or emotionally affect consumers to have more positive responses to the endorsed product. Some research in the USA suggests celebrity ads are perceived as more entertaining, and celebrity endorsers are seen as trustworthy due to the "widespread attribution that well-known stars do not really work for the endorsement fee, but are motivated by a genuine affection for the product" (Kamen et al., 1975, p. 18). In spite of the frequent use of famous personalities in ads, little systematic, experimental research seems to have been conducted

The general finding in almost all of the few experimental research studies on celebrities is that celebrity ads are more effective than noncelebrity ads (Atkin & Block, 1983; Friedman et al., 1977; Kahle & Homer, 1984; Petty et al., 1983). Although none of the researchers have tried to explain why this is so, higher belief, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and likabilty of endorsers has been reported for celebrity ads, and a more favorable product image has been found when such endorsers are used, at least under some conditions. No attempt has been made at explaining these findings or at integrating the results and presenting any theoretical framework. We have focused on all of the source variables of concern, namely, believability, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and likability of endorsers in ads. Measures of persuasion were also taken to assess effectiveness. Further analysis was undertaken to enable theoretical delineations of the psychological process of persuasion in celebrity ads. The cognitive response approach seems to offer some framework for this.

The cognitive response approach, as originally outlined by Greenwald (1967), postulates that when people receive persuasive communications, they attempt to relate the new information to their existing knowledge about the topic and generate thoughts that may or may not be in the material itself (Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 1981). These thoughts and feelings, labeled cognitive responses, are expected to influence attitude change. It seemed reasonable to expect that while viewing celebrity ads, viewers may be influenced to think about past connections with the known personality in the ad and attitude about the product may be affected by some of these connections. New messages, it was expected, would be integrated with the old so as to build a unifying, coherent, and consistent brand image. Monitoring the cognitive responses generated by individuals when exposed to an ad should allow for some understanding of the process. Cognitive responses were collected and analysed in this study to assess the influence of celebrities in ads on attitudes about products and buying intentions.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), based on the cognitive response approach, delineates two alternative routes to persuasion: the Central route and the Peripheral route. The former is concerned with attitude change occuring via diligent consideration of the message so that issue-related cognitive responses are generated. That is, for ads, product or brand related cognitive responses should be largely generated if a central route processing occurs. The peripheral route processing assumes little issue-(product)-related processing, rather available cues (e.g. number of claims made, or source in ad, etc.) are used to decide if agreement with the advocated message will occur. For celebrity ads, it has been suggested, the celebrity may be one such persuasive cue that may be used to influence brand attitudes and buying intentions. We have tested the viabilty of this model in understanding celebrity ads processing. Cognitive response listings were taken and categorized as product-related or model-related (among others). Statistical tests were applied to assess and compare the processing of celebrity ads and noncelebrity ads to see if a central or peripheral route dominated either type of ads.

It appears that some personality variables may influence the extent of cognitive responding. We have explored the influence of cognitive style. Congnitve style is influenced by the level of psychological differentiation in an individual, and manifests itself in the perceptual, cognitive and social processing undertaken by the individual. Cognitive style measures identify individuals as field dependent (FD) and field independent (FI). The former is characterized by a lower need and inclination to differentiate and analyze messages, environments, etc. It is expected that such individuals would be more prone to rely on celebrities in ads and be more influenced by them than the latter group who are more inclined to process messages and be analytical in their perceptual, social and intellectual processing.

Subjects

A total of 90 women in the age group of 18 to 25 were used as subjects for the study. Undergraduate students at Syracuse University were asked to volunteer for the study. Half of them (45) were randomly assigned to the celebrity ad condition and the other half (45) to the noncelebrity ad condition. Each subject was shown two product-commercials, one for haircare, Jhirmack shampoo, and another for clothes from KMart, featuring celebrities or noncelebrities in both conditions. Both celebrity and noncelebrity ad groups were made up equal numbers of FD (16) and FI (29) subjects.

Procedure

Two celebrity audio-visual ads were prepared from TV commercials and print ads for the two brands for use as stimulus ads for the experimental group. The "Jhirmack" hair care commercial featuring Victoria Principal (actress), and the "K-Mart" clothes (dresses, skirts, blouses, dress-pants, etc.) for women commercial featuring Jaclyn Smith (actress) were used. These were from different product classes, but both related to social and psychological risk, the products for which celebrities are expected to be most effective. Having more than one commercial has allowed for stronger generalizability of the results. These commercials were both targeted to women, featuring well known American TV or movie stars. For the control group, the same ads were used, except that the pictures of the celebrity were switched with that of another equally physically attractive (noncelebrity) model. Visuals of the product and the audio message were identical for the two ads.

Subjects were pre-screened for cognitive style and invited to come in groups for the experiment. After the procedure was made clear, the first stimulus ad was shown, and subjects were immediately asked to write down all the thoughts and feelings they had while viewing the ad. This was followed by the second ad exposure and thought listing. Finally, source ratings, product-brand ratings and persuasion measures were completed by subjects. Order of presentation of ads was balanced by rotating them so that half the subjects viewed the Jhirmack ad first and the other half, the KMart ad first.

Results

A 2 x 2 x 2 (Celebrity x Cognitive Style x Order of Presentation) ANOVA with repeated measures (for the two ads) was run for the various dependent measures, namely, source characteristics, persuasion measures, and the cognitive responses.

Source characteristics. Results indicated that the perception of the endorser in an ad was clearly influenced by the celebrity status of the endorser. As expected, and consistent with what has been previously found in research, celebrity endorsers were perceived as significantly more trustworthy, $F(1, 82) = 17.03$, $p < .0001$, and the claims made by them in the ads as more believable as compared to the noncelebrity endorsers in both the tested ads, $F(1, 82) = 8.26$, p , .005. On a rating scale of 1 to 9, where 1 was the lowest and 9 the highest rating, the mean trustworthiness rating score for the celebrity source were 5.62 for Jhirmack and 5.87 for KMart. In comparison they were significant lower for the noncelebrity models, at 4.71 for Jhirmack and 4.44 for KMart. The believability ratings showed a similar trend, 5.11 and 5.02 for the celebrity ads and 4.42 and 3.87 for the noncelebrity ads for Jhirmack and KMart repectively. The celebrity in the KMart ad ($M = 6.98$) was also significantly more liked than the noncelebrity model ($M = 4.76$) in the same ad, $F(1, 82) = 35.32$, $p < .0001$. The celebrity in the Jhirmack ad also received higher likability ratings ($M = 5.84$) as compared to the noncelebrity endorser ($M = 5.42$) in the Jhirmack ad, but the difference between the two was not significant.

Cognitive style, a personality variable that manifests itself as a distinct mode of perceptual, cognitive and social processing, was expected to interact with the celebrity variable such that the field dependent (FD) subjects would be more influenced by the celebrity than the field independent (FI) viewers. The trend of results for cognitive style were in the expected direction though not significant (for believability, likability) or only marginally so (for trustworthiness). However, the consistent and systematic pattern suggests cognitive style may be a variable that influences celebrity perceptions and should be further researched with a larger sample size. Alternative measures of cognitive style may also be explored.

An interesting finding emerged from the analysis of the order of ad presentation. Some viewers saw the hair care ad first, followed by the clothes ad; for others the order was reversed. Quite consistently, across all the three source variables, the ad that was viewed second (last) received significantly higher ratings regardless of which ad it was: For believability, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 5.98$, $\underline{p} < .017$, for trustworthiness, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 2.37$, $\underline{p} < .128$, and for likability, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 8.58$, $\underline{p} < .004$ for the hair care ad and the celebrity x order effect was significant for the clothes ad, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 5.15$, $\underline{p} < .026$. This clearly has serious implications for advertisers as typically, television ads are aired in a series within programme breaks. Since the rating measures were taken after the viewing of both ads, this order effect may be result of "recency effect," so that the ad last seen before the rating exercise was better remembered. Or it may be that the first ad created some mental set for the second one so that it was actually better received. Further research is needed to establish the mechanisms at work, and also field experiments should be undertaken to see the influence of order in a natural setting.

The ratings for physical attractiveness of the models was not influenced by either cognitive style or order of ad presentation. The celebrity in both ads was rated as significantly more attractive than the noncelebrity, $F(1, 82) = 26.51$, $p < .0001$.

Persuasion. As a result of higher source ratings for celebrities, it was expected that celebrity ads would persuade the viewers more than noncelebrity ads. Further, FD subjects would be more influenced by celebrity ads than the FI subjects.

Results for one of the persuasion measures, attitude towards the product in the ad, were consistent with this expectation. For both products, FDs viewing celebrity ads rated the product higher (Ms = 6.27 for Jhirmack and 3.90 for KMart) than the FDs viewing noncelebrity ads (Ms = 5.12 for Jhirmack and 3.37 for KMart). FIs rated the product better in the noncelebrity ads in both the cases (Ms = 6.02 and 4.19 for noncelebrity as compared to 5.12 and 3.37 for celebrity ads for Jhirmack and KMart respectively). The celebrity x cognitive style interaction was significant, $F(1, 82) = 4.09$, $p < .046$. This is interesting. Although the FI subjects rated the celebrity source as more believable, trustworthy, likable and attractive, the product ratings given by them were higher in the noncelebrity conditions for both ads. It was expected that FIs would be less influenced than FDs by the celebrity; however, it appears that the celebrity is a negative factor for FIs so far as product attitudes go.

Buying intentions were taken as another measure of persuasion. These were quite low for both the products. The results for the two were mixed. For the Jhirmack ad, celebrity and cognitive style did not influence buying intentions. Order of ad presentation was a significant factor, and once again, as found earlier, buying intentions were higher for that viewed second among all viewers, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 5.24$, $\underline{p} < .025$. Prior product usership, and product attitude were found to be significantly related to buying intentions. Users of Jhirmack were more inclined to buy the product as compared to nonusers. Also, the buying intentions were higher among those that rated the product higher.

For the KMart ad, the celebrity source appeared to influence buying intentions. As expected, intention to buy was (marginally) significantly higher among celebrity ad viewers, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 3.13$, $\underline{p} < .081$. Cognitive style moderated this so that FDs viewing celebrity ads were (marginally) more inclined to buy as compared to FIs, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 2.81$, $\underline{p} < .097$. FIs were, however, not less inclined to buy after viewing celebrity ads as compared to after viewing noncelebrity ads as found for product attitude. It appears that celebrities did influence all subjects including FIs to have higher buying intentions. However, FIs were resistant to openly rating the product better when endorsed by the celebrity.

Order effects, though not significant, showed a similar trend, and buying intentions were higher when the KMart ad was viewed second. As found for Jhirmack, prior usership and product attitude were significantly related to buying intentions. It seems ads reinforce consumer choices already made and promote brand loyalty in consumer goods like hair care products and clothes. Also, in the light of much debate regarding attitude favorability and buying behavior, it appears that for this class of consumer products, those that are low priced and need recurrent buying, and those that involve some social and psychological risk, there is a significant relationship between the two, and higher the product attitude, more the buying intention.

Conclusion

Thus, it may be concluded that celebrities in ads for consumer products that involve social and psychological risk, such as haircare and clothing, enjoyed higher ratings for believability and trustworthiness among all viewers, although field dependent subjects were most influenced by celebrities. Some celebrities were also more liked than noncelebrity models in ads. Product impressions were clearly higher for field dependent subjects viewing celebrity ads but not for field independent subjects who gave higher ratings to the product in the noncelebrity ads. Results for buying intentions were not similar for the two product ads studied. Jhirmack, it appears enjoyed a high usership among the sample group which influenced buying intentions. Also, subjects did not think the celebrity had a real interest in the product, and this may have also influenced the celebrity to be less successful in promoting buying intentions.

For KMart, the usership was very low, and subjects felt that the celebrity was really interested in the product, and she influenced the viewers to have slightly higher buying intentions as compared to the noncelebrity. FD and FI subjects were both more inclined to buy KMart clothes after viewing celebrity ads.

It must be noted, however, that the buying intentions on the whole were quite low even for the celebrity ad viewers. Order of presentation of the ads was found to be an important factor. In general, the last viewed ad before the response measures were taken received higher ratings for the source variables, product attitude and buying intentions (except for FDs viewing KMart ads in the latter two measures).

Cognitive Responses

The cognitive responses - thoughts and feelings - generated by viewers after each ad presentation were analysed to understand the processing of the ad. Several points emerge from the findings. First, simultaneous processing of product and nonproduct related information occurs for all viewers, celebrity and noncelebrity. That is, all subjects generated both, product-related and model-related thoughts. None of the groups of viewers produced any exclusive type of cognitive responses. Second, subjects generated thoughts not necessarily in the message itself. As suggested by the cognitive response theorists, past connections with the celebrity and the product-brands were frequently made. Third, processing for celebrity ads was different in quality to noncelebrity ads, in that celebrity ad viewer produced more model-related cognitive responses, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 12.89$, $\underline{p} < .0006$, whereas noncelebrity ad viewers produced more product related thoughts, $\underline{F}(1, 82) = 7.95$, $\underline{p} < .006$. The total number of cognitive responses generated by the celebrity and noncelebrity ad viewers was not different, suggesting processing for either did not stop earlier than the other. However, the type of thoughts generated by the two groups was different. Celebrity and noncelebrity ad viewers seem to focus on different aspects of the ad. Fourth, field independent subjects produced more cognitive responses than field dependent subjects as expected, $F(1, 82) = 3.46$, $p < .067$, and again as per expectations, there was no systematic difference in the type of thoughts generated by each group. Finally, order of ad presentation did not influence the frequency or type of cognitive responses generated. Thought listings were taken immediately after each ad exposure and, thus, order may not have influenced the frequency or type of thoughts generated.

An analysis of cognitive responses also showed that processing of celebrity ad tended to be dominated by the peripheral route. Once again, it must be stressed that the central versus peripheral processing was not found to be a all-or-none phenomenon. All viewers processed both types of information, product-related and model-related. However, thoughts regarding the model were significantly more frequent in the celebrity ad viewers' thought list.

Implications

The implication for advertisers using celebrities in ads are, therefore, manifold. First, do not ignore the product and product-related information since this information is also processed. Celebrities trigger past connection in viewers' minds, so use celebrities that would evoke positive connections.

Thoughts related to the celebrity dominate the processing, Thus, it appears that if the celebrity in the ad is well matched with the product and highly involved with the product in the ad, thoughts about the celebrity may evoke product-related thoughts which may help promote favorable attitudes. Overall ad impression is a result of product-related, model-related, and ad-execution related thoughts, and since this overall ad-attitude significantly influences product-attitude, attention to all aspects must be paid such that overall positive thoughts are evoked.

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The Invisible Woman:
Two Decades of Magazine Images of Nurses

by

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Paper presented to the Magazine Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis, MN, July 1990

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The Invisible Woman:
Two Decades of Magazine Images of Nurses

Introduction

Nursing Shortage

North America is now in the grip of a shortage of nurses that has been described as more than inconvenient; it is downright dangerous. In the United States the national vacancy rate in nursing, or percentage of unfilled nursing positions, is just over 11 percent. That translates into a shortage of between 137,000 and 200,000 nurses (Tolchin, 1989; Kleinmann, 1989).

Nursing employs more than 1 1/2 times the number of people employed in engineering and related fields, twice as many people as real estate sales employs and more than four times as many people as marketing, advertising and public relations combined. The nursing profession ranked 12th of the 30 fastest growing occupations in 1986 with an expected growth rate of 39 to 48 percent expected by the year 2000. The nursing shortage is a women's issue, as almost 96 percent of those many people employed as nurses are women, according to the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1988).

As a result of understaffing of nurses, surgerical operations have been postponed and even canceled. Ward patients have suffered neglect. Nurses forced to work double shifts have seen the quality of their work decline in direct proportion to the number of hours worked.

Three factors are generally blamed for the shortage: salary complaints, hard work and low professional status. Salary complaints focus more on the compressed salary scale than on inadequate pay (Kleinmann, 1989; French, 1989; Tolchin). However, the financial factors are becoming less problematic as state hospital nurses are winning wage parity with other state employees and advancement opportunities develop for nurses who choose to remain in bedside nursing. The job of the nurse is more difficult than ever primarily because of the aging of the population and because of Medicare regulations that move patients in and out of the hospitals more quickly than in years past. The result is that the average ward patient is sicker than in the past and requires more nursing care.

The media cannot be held responsible for creating these problems, nor can they do much to alleviate them. The media have, however, been accused of contributing to the profession's lack of status. A 1988 U.S. survey of the prestige of 122 professions revealed that nurses ranked 91st, followed by embalmers at 92nd (Todd, 1989). The image problem has been blamed for the decline in applications and admissions to nursing schools, which are down by 30 percent since 1982-83 (Hubbell, 1989), resulting in an enrollment drop of 26 percent since 1984 (Tolchin, 1989; Kleinmann, 1989). Fewer and fewer people are choosing to pursue careers in nursing.

Career Decision Making

Theory and research in decision-making give an understanding of how media might contribute to career choices. First, descriptive theories state that decisions are made based upon heuristics. An individual choosing a career using the availability heuristic would simply choose the career that came most readily to mind. Print and broadcast media could increase the availability of a given career through repetition, or by featuring that career often in the media content. The representativeness heuristic might cause an individual to evaluate a given career based upon generalizations drawn from observations of the career. Those observations could consist of media images or reality, or both (Tversky and Kahneman, 1986).

Normative theories of decision making, like multiattribute evaluation theory, state that the decision-maker assigns probabilities or likelihoods to certain outcomes associated with the given alternative choices. The outcomes are evaluated based on their degree of desirability. The most attractive decision would be the one providing the highest probability of the most desirable outcomes (Edwards and Newman, 1986). Among attributes generally desired from nursing careers are good earning potential and work that provides personal fulfillment (Hall, 1974). Media portrayal of these attributes of nursing careers could affect the decision maker's assessment of the likelihood of a nursing career yielding these outcomes.

Media Images of Nurses

Numerous examinations of the representation and portrayal of women in television have revealed that women and minority groups are severely underrepresented in television programming (Seggar and Wheeler, 1973). Sex-role stereotyping pervades throughout the television programming (Franzwa, 1978).

In a content analysis of television portrayals of 34 occupations, DeFleur (1964) ranked occupational groups in terms of their relative power and prestige. Nurses earned a -100 rating and ranked 32nd out of 34. In a 1979 study, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found that 40.1 percent of female characters seen on television had no occupation, 7.3 percent were secretaries and 7.2 percent were nurses. Kalisch and Kalisch (1984) found that nurse characters on television were depicted as inferior to doctors. They were less often shown helping patients than were doctors. Nurses' careers were less central to their lives than were doctors' careers. As nurses' commitment to their profession declined, their role as sex objects escalated.

In their 1986 study, Kalisch and Kalisch expanded the examination of media images of nurses across six decades and into motion pictures and novels. They found that nurses as depicted in the entertainment media were young, white, female, single and childless. Since 1940 media nurses have exhibited decreasing amounts of individualism. Nurse characters lack intellectual pursuits, career commitment, basic intelligence, rationality, problem-solving skills and clinical skills. They are less empathic or nurturing than physicians.

The Kalisches extended their research to the informational media in a content analysis of newspaper reports of nurse strikes in U.S. inpatient institutions (1985). They found that newspaper headlines were weighted toward negative images of nurses. Nurses were portrayed as having negative relationships with other health care professionals like physicians and hospital administrators. Stories were more likely to criticize nurses than to praise them. Overall, the Kalisches stated that only stories reporting nurses' involvement in crimes were more damaging to the image of the profession than the strike stories.

The Kalisches's tremendous contribution to understanding the media image of nurses notwithstanding, relatively little research has focused specifically on the nursing profession. Magazines have essentially been ignored in the examination of the profession's public image. No studies have attempted the examine ways in which the media images might affect career decisions, thus contributing to the decline in enrollment in nursing programs. This descriptive study of images of the nursing profession attempts to address both of those voids by content analyzing magazines to test hypotheses drawn from decision-making theory.

Hypotheses

Given the availability heuristic, a decline in the number of stories about nurses or nursing should precede a decline in the number of admissions to nursing programs by two or more years. This should be especially true of the career columns common to young women's magazines. An increase in the number of articles about nurses or nursing would make nursing more available to readers when they consider career options; it would come more readily to mind. A decrease in the number of articles would make nursing less available. If magazine images are to be held partially responsible for the decline in the number of people enrolling in nursing programs, the number of articles about nurses and nursing should decline starting in the mid to late 1970s. The *Nursing Data Book* (1988) shows the first decline in the number of graduations from RN programs in 1979. The decision to enter an RN program would have to have been made three to five years earlier. Media would have to have exerted their influence even earlier.

Mobilizing information, in the form of descriptions of nursing programs and addresses from which further information might be requested should likewise be more likely to appear in young women's magazines than in other types, like news magazines. Descriptions of role models (nurses or nursing students) should enhance the effectiveness of the articles in encouraging readers to consider nursing careers (Patterson, 1973).

The new women's magazines, targeted at working women, should consistently carry articles about or of interest to nurses, if such magazines can be said to reflect reality. Nursing, after all, employs many people and is almost 95 percent female.

Nursing is a traditional occupation, and traditional women's magazines might therefore be expected to carry articles about nurses. However, because the traditional women's magazines focus on care of the home and family, fewer articles are expected in those magazines than in the other two groups of women's magazines. Increases or decreases in the number of articles should make nursing more or less available to housewives considering careers outside of the home and to women, like relatives or educators, who might exert influence on younger decision-makers. The pattern of change, therefore, should match the pattern expected in the young women's magazines, but the degree of change should be more moderate.

The news magazines, with their broader audience are expected to attend less closely to a profession that is almost exclusively female. Therefore, the amount of coverage of nurses in the news magazines and the level of prominence given to that coverage should be lower than in women's magazines. Again the pattern of change in the amount of coverage should be similar to that predicted for the women's magazines, but the amount of coverage and the degree of change should be less.

If a profession is consistently paired with negative descriptions of its image, the representativeness heuristic would cause a negative evaluation of it as a career option, an evaluation that may be undeserved. Stereotypes like those described by the Kalisches would contribute to making nursing an unattractive career choice, as women choose careers that reflect their self-perceptions (Patterson, 1973). For stereotyping to have caused a decline in admissions to nursing programs, the shift toward the negative stereotypes would have had to start around the mid 1970s.

Finally, multiattribute theory suggests that people assess the probability and desirability of the consequences of various options. Primary care-giving and nurturing opportunities seemed to motivate women in nursing school by providing a sense of personal fulfillment (Culkin, Tricarico, Cohen, 1987). It seems reasonable to assume that a rate of pay described as "low" would not be a desirable attribute. Again, if magazine coverage of the profession is to be held responsible in some part for the reduction in admissions to nursing programs, descriptions of the nature of the nurse's work should deemphasize the job as a source of personal fulfillment beginning in the mid 1970s. Ilustrations should be dominated by images of nurses engaged in activities other than administering patient care. The descriptions of remuneration should increasingly describe the pay as low or inadequate.

Method

The Population

All articles in women's magazines and the three major news magazines cited under "nurses and nursing" in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* from 1967 through 1987 were analyzed. In addition, any articles that appeared under topic headings that were cross-referenced under "nurses and nursing" were analyzed. The use of *Reader's Guide* should facilitate replication and expansion of this research across different occupations or different time periods.

Surprisingly, only 60 articles from 12 magazines were referenced during the 20-year period analyzed. Magazines from which articles were drawn were:

Glamour
Mademoiselle
Seventeen
Redbook
Working Woman
Ms.
Good Housekeeping
Ladies Home Journal
McCall's
Newsweek
Time
U.S. News & World Report

The women's magazines were grouped into three categories so that comparisons might be made among them. The "young women's magazine" group consisted of *Seventeen, Mademoiselle* and *Glamour*, magazines that include teens in their description of their readership. *Redbook, Working Woman* and *Ms.* were grouped as "new women's magazines" because women in their 20s and 30s dominate their readership. The "traditional women's magazine" group was made up of women's magazines established before 1900, *McCall's, Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies' Home Journal*. Although *Redbook* was established in 1908, its readership demographics are more similar to those of *Working Woman* and *Ms.* than to those of the "traditional" magazines, hence its placement in the "new" category.

Because nursing is primarily a women's profession, women's magazines were considered likely to be read by women consciously or unconsciously evaluating nursing as a career option or by women who might influence the career decisions of others. The broad circulations of the news magazines makes them a likely source of influence on womens' career decisions and on public perceptions of careers in general.

The two-decade time period from 1967 to 1987 was chosen because examining the media's contribution to the current and projected nursing shortage was of immediate interest. According to the *Nursing Data Book* (1978) the growth in the number of graduations from RN programs increased dramatically in 1967 and 1968, and then again from 1972 through 1975. The growth in the number of graduations slowed to a standstill until 1986 when it took a dramatic downturn leading into the current nursing shortage.

Variables Examined

The articles were coded for year of publication, month of publication, prominence of story, topic of the story, the number and nature of illustrations, the image of the profession, relationship of nurses with physicians, the nature of the work, the description of the rate of pay and the presence of mobilizing information.

The prominence of the story was determined simply to make possible a comparison of prominence through time and across the magazines analyzed in this study. The story was awarded one prominence point if it was located in the front half of the magazine, with an additional point awarded for each additional page on which it was continued. A higher score represents a higher likelihood that the story, or a portion of it, would be noticed by readers of the magazine.

The image of nursing was coded for consistency with the Kalisches' categories of noble or religious calling, skilled and decisive professional, wife-in-training and sex object. A review of a subsample of articles yielded the categories used in analyzing the articles for the remaining variables. A copy of the coding form listing the coding categories for each of the variables can be found in Appendix A.

Statistical Analysis

Because of the small population size, sophisticated statistical manipulations were considered inappropriate. Descriptive statistics, scatterplots, crosstabs and chi squares were computed to reveal changes in the variables through time and to identify relationships between variables. The chi squares for relationships reported were significant at the .05 level.

Results

The Availability Hypotheses

The overall number of stories through time was relatively even with a low of zero in 1974 and a high of seven articles, or 12.28 percent in 1987. Even when years are combined, the data reveal no noticeable peaks or valleys in the number of stories generated, with small increases of 1 to 2 percentage points since the mid 1970s. Similarly, the prominence of stories about nurses was fairly constant through time.

Consistent with the prediction drawn from the availability heuristic, the young women's magazines showed their burst of activity in coverage of nursing as a career option during the first three years anlyzed here, 1967 through 1969. Beginning in 1970, other careers were featured in columns like *Mademoiselle's* "Jobscope." Again in 1981 and 1987 magazines from the young women's group featured nursing as a career option.

The magazines providing the most mobilizing information were the young women's magazines, despite the small number of articles. The young women's magazines were also far more likely than the other types of magazines to provide addresses from which interested readers could request further information. These findings are consistent with predictions.

The news magazines unexpectedly came in second in the provision of mobilizing information. Although the news magazines provided no addresses, several articles in the news magazines did describe the training alternatives leading to the designation of RN.

The news magazines were also far more likely to describe the nursing behaviors of people still engaged in the nursing profession than were the women's magazines. Individuals whose nursing behaviors were described were considered nurse role models for the purposes of this research. While nurse role models were described in the new and traditional women's magazines, a larger proportion (58 percent) of the nurses described in the women's magazines had become dissaffected and left the nursing profession than described in the news magazines (33 percent).

Of the three types of magazines, the news magazines contributed more articles on the profession, nearly 37 percent, than did the other three types. Weekly publication, government changes in the medicare system and the nursing shortage were contributing factors. However, the latter two factors ought to have and did generate coverage in the women's magazines, as well. *Newsweek* contained the largest number of articles relating to the nursing profession, with the *Ladies Home Journal* publishing the fewest. Although the new women's magazines published fewer articles than the news magazines, they did rank first among the women's magazine groups. *Working Women*, which was not in publication in 1967, still outdid all of the other women's magazines in terms of the number of articles published, suggesting partial support for the notion that publications targeted for working women would recognize that nurses are an important segment of the population of working women.

The amount of attention paid to the nursing profession by the traditional women's magazines was minimal and consistent through time, as predicted, while the coverage by new women's magazines increased during the second decade. The appearance of *Working Woman* accounts for at least half of that surge. However, the coverage of the profession in the news magazines also surged, with more than twice as many articles about the profession appearing during the second decade studied than the first. The amount of coverage in the traditional group remained stable over time, as expected.

The number of stories indexed under nursing in the young women's group shrank by one, and only two articles presented nursing as a career option in the second decade, as opposed to seven in the first decade. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis generated by the availability phenomenon. However, the number of articles overall is up in the second decade.

The Representativeness Hypothesis

While lack of coverage of the profession in the young women's magazines provides some support for the availability hypothesis that would attribute some responsiblity for the drop in nursing school admissions to the media, negative stereotypes are what most of the "blame-the-media" proponents have in mind. The sex object stereotype that the Kalisches found so prevalent in the entertainment media was was nonexistent in the magazines analyzed, with the image of the skilled and decisive professional being the dominant stereotype consistently through the two decades examined. It appeared in 60 percent of the total articles. Thus the representativeness hypothesis that would support a blame-the-media approach is unsupported unless the skilled professional stereotype is actually evaluated negatively by women who might be drawn to careers in nursing.

The Multiattribute Evaluation Hypotheses

The media descriptions of attributes of nursing as a career option, however, are more revealing. Only 15.79 percent of articles described the nature of the work as personally fulfilling. Over 38 percent described it as medical practice. While this description is favored by administrators and representatives of the National League for Nursing and probably by writers sensitive to the nursing crisis, it could be a contributing factor in the failure to attract applicants to nursing programs. While personal fulfillment factors appeared as part of the feminine cluster in female nursing students, it was not part of the cluster among medical students (Hall, 1974; Culkin, Tricarico and Cohen, 1987). It is possible that individuals to whom personal fulfillment is important are motivated away from the practice of medicine and away from nursing when they perceive it to be like the practice of medicine. More than 17 percent of the articles did not describe the nature of the work, and another 12 percent described it as grueling, laborious or exhausting. Further, photographs, which made up the bulk of illustrations in the articles were more likely to depict a nurse with a piece of machinery (nearly 27 percent) than with a patient (nearly 18 percent). The old distinction between caring (nurses) and curing (physicians) may be an important element motivating women to pursue nursing careers.

Nearly 80 percent of the articles that described nurses' pay described it as low or inadequate. Further, the pay scale was frequently described as compressed. This evaluative statement is bound to influence the reader's assessment of the nurse's salary, despite the fact that entry level nurses earn twice as much as the average mass communication graduate (*Press Woman*, 1986; Hubbell, 1989). All of the articles published in the second decade reviewed in this study describe the nurses' pay as inadequate, whereas all of the articles published before 1977 described the pay in positive terms.

Predictions drawn from multiattribute evaluation theory suggested that "personally fullfilling" would be increasingly absent from descriptions of the nature of the job of a nurse and that pay would be increasingly described as inadequate. These expectations clearly materialized. Magazines may be held accountable for negatively influencing the evaluations of these attributes of the nursing profession during the last decade.

Conclusion

Television has been tried and found guilty of contaminating the public's image of the nursing profession. This public image may have contributed to the decline in the profession's popularity as a career choice. The role of the print media in shaping the public's perception of the nursing profession is less well known. And its role in shaping career decisions has, with the exception of this effort, remained unexamined. While unable to charge the print media with turning prospective nurses away from the profession and prove them guilty, this research has identified ways in which magazines may have influenced evaluations of nursing as a career option.

During the last decade attributes known to have motivated women toward careers in nursing have been overwhelmed by other attributes with unknown appeal in magazine articles. Readers may conclude that those original attributes are no longer associated with the nursing profession and seek other careers that do have the desired attributes.

The image of nursing portrayed by the magazines analyzed seemed to conform to the image promoted by nursing association representatives, many of whom have graduate degrees and have chosen careers that are more closely resemble business administration than nursing. That image shows the nurse as a medical practitioner working with high-tech machinery. There is, however, no data to suggest that such an image is, in fact, appealing to the type of individual who would find primary care nursing a satisfying career. Data from the 1970s suggests the opposite. Discriminant analysis is needed to identify the characteristics of women in the 1980s who might be attracted to careers in nursing and to identify the attributes of the career that might attract those women.

Nursing has been curiously absent during the last decade from the list of professions featured by the magazines most likely to influence young women while they are making thair first career decisions. Because of that absence, nursing may fail to come to mind when young women think about careers. While no statistical data exist, it appears that magazines like *Seventeen, Mademoiselle* and *Glamour* are featuring nontraditional careers for women in their career columns in an effort to broaden the role of women in society. While that effort is commendable in some of its aspects, it is less so if it results in squeezing out traditional options. Who benefits when a woman graduates with a degree in geological engineering and becomes one of the very few women engineers standing with the men in an unemployment line? Further research should be undertaken to determine whether traditional career options are being squeezed out of young women's consciousness as a result of media and interpersonal promotion of nontraditional careers. If further research yields evidence of the squeezing effect, efforts could be undertaken to establish a balance between new and traditional career options that would better serve women's needs for career information and society's needs for a balanced work force.

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Appendix A

Coding Sheet for Study of Magazine Images of Nurses

Magazine_______________________

Date____________________

Story____

Page__________

Position: Front 1/2_____

Back 1/2_____

Topic_________________________

Number of Pages: ________

Illustrations

Number _____

Types
- _____ Photo
- _____ Info Graphic
- _____ Line drawing
- _____ Caricature

What Illustrated
- _____Tasks w/Patient
- _____Tasks w/Technology
- _____Interpersonal Relations
- _____ Portrait
- _____Other

Stereotypes

Image of Profession
- _____Noble Calling
- _____ Professional
- _____ Wife-in-Training
- _____ Sex Object

Other_________________________

Nature of Work
- _____Personally Fufilling
- _____Laborious
- _____Managerial
- _____Medical Practitioner
- _____Not Described

Other_________________________

Relationship with Physicians
- _____Romantic
- _____Collegial
- _____Confrontational
- _____Subordinate
- _____Not Described

Pay
- _____Enabling
- _____Inadequate
- _____Not Described

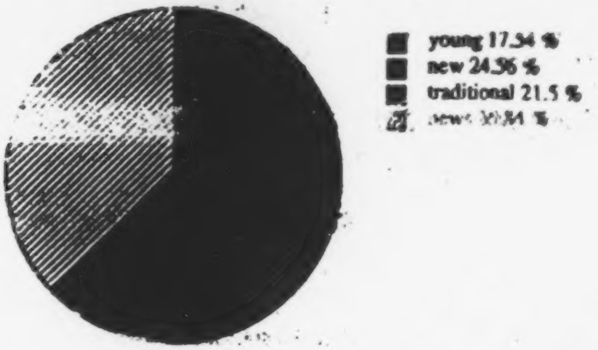
Mobilizing Information

- _____Training Programs Described
- _____Address(es) Provided
- _____None

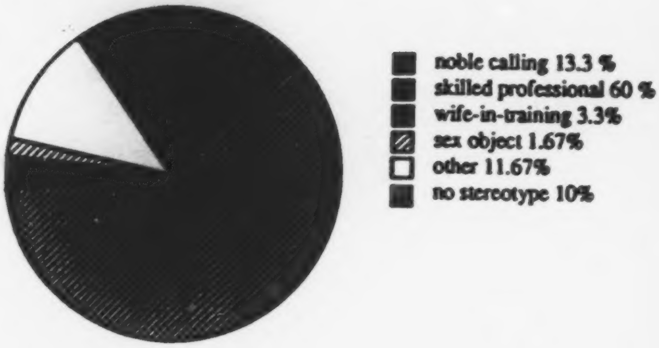
Number of **Role Models** _____
- _____Currently Nursing
- _____Former Nurse

Appendix B

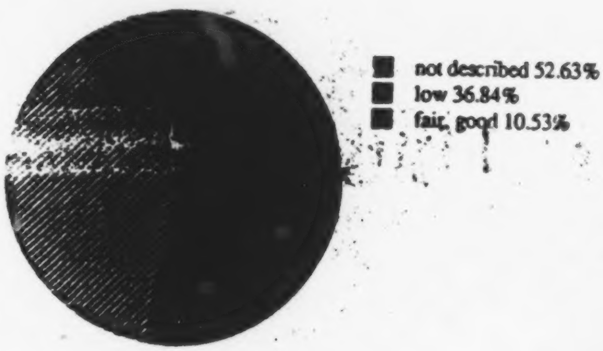
Number of Stories by Magazine Type



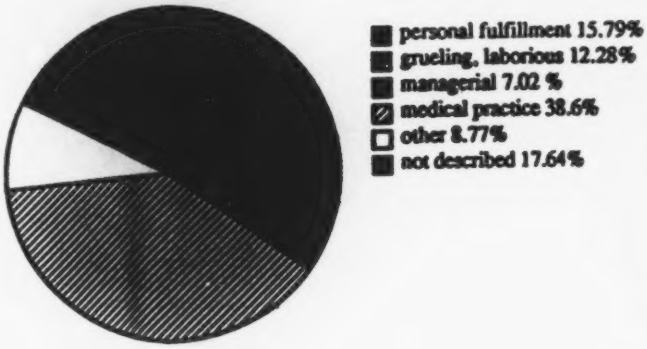
Professional Image



Descriptions of Nurses' Pay



Nature of Work



News Coverage of the Abortion Issue:

Framing Changes in the 1980's

by

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August 9-12, 1990
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The issue of abortion has achieved a leading role in the public discourse and political power struggles now occurring in the United States. No issue in the public eye is more emotionally and bitterly divisive. Historically, abortion has been viewed as an attack on the family.[1] Now, legalized abortion has challenged traditional power relationships in society. The public discussion has been carried on in large part through the news media. The social arena of public battle has been marked by protest, propaganda, drama and debate. But the relationship between the social issue, and the way the news is framed by the media is not always apparent. The past decade has been marked by a powerful media campaign carried out by anti-abortion forces.[2] Both pro-choice and pro-life groups have well-organized campaigns. The pro-lifers are far better funded; pro-life PACs are more numerous and raise far more money than pro-choice PACs.[3] Since 1984, pro-life planned media events have attracted considerable coverage.[4] In light of the recent U. S. Supreme Court decision in the Webster case in July, 1989, and the subsequent renewed fervor on both sides, a number of questions arise about the framing of the coverage of the abortion issue over the past decade.

This preliminary study examines framing of abortion stories in 1985 and 1989 to assess the relationship between the political struggle and framing changes. The theoretical and research contexts for this study involve several areas of literature: the sociology of news production, previous studies of abortion coverage, and feminist literature on the abortion issue.

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[1] Pamela Johnston Conover and Virginia Gray, Feminism and the New Right: Conflict over the American Family. (New York: Praeger, 1983).

[2] Terms used with reference to this issue can be a source of controversy in and of themselves. I have chosen to refer to those concerned with the right to choose as "pro-choice." I use both "anti-abortion" and "pro-life" in referring to those opposed to abortion rights. I have tried to use "pro-life" to refer to the campaign of the 1980's, and "anti-abortion" with reference to analysis of coverage and activism.

[3] Clyde Wilcox, "Political Action Committees and Abortion: A Longitudinal Analysis," Women and Politics 9, (1989), 1.

[4] Joanmarie Kalter, "TV News and Religion: Network Coverage of Abortion," TV Guide, 33 (November, 1985), 6-8.

Sociology of news production

The nature of news production and presentation has been thoroughly documented. In any coverage, the news media must frame an issue. Gaye Tuchman describes the news frame as a window on the world, giving meaning to amorphous happenings by organizing "strips" of the everyday world.[5] The framing, as Tuchman sees it, then also becomes part of the reality. News constructs reality, rather than mirroring reality. Given that assumption, the precise manner of framing becomes significant in determining the role of the media in the public discourse.

Todd Gitlin studied the dynamics of the "framing" of television coverage of the New Left in the 1960's. In his work, The Whole World is Watching, Gitlin says the power to define reality lies in the framing process.

> Frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters....Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse.[6]

Gitlin's perspective is critical, but the notion of framing is not confined to critical theory. The importance of the idea of framing lies in the recognition that how a story is conceived and carried out is crucial to what the story is. Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester also argue that news, as a constructed reality, is a creation based on the activities of all those involved - promoters, news assemblers, and consumers.[7] Other studies of news production reveal that stories are framed by news routines, manufactured media events and reliance on official sources.[8]

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[5] Gaye Tuchman, Making News: A study in the Construction of Reality. (New York: The Free Press, 1978.)

[6] Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 7.

Studies of media coverage of social movements have noted that "protest groups may gain legitimacy through association, as when an established group or powerful public official speaks on behalf of the cause being protested."[9] The Reagan campaign may well have lent such legitimacy to the pro-life cause. With that legitimacy, may have come a change in coverage. And with the new coverage, may have come a new framing of the abortion issue.

Studies of abortion coverage

The literature on coverage of abortion is spotty, although activists on both sides of the abortion issue realize the importance of framing. One study marks the year 1962 as the date the framing of the question began to take on a pro-choice angle.[10] Marvin Olasky and Susan Olasky have reported that during the Sherri Finkbine thalidomide case, the language about abortion changed from the pro-life language of morality - murder and baby killing - to the pro-choice medical language of abortion and fetus. The work of these authors is anecdotal, and carries a strong pro-life stance.

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[7] Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester, "News as Purposive Behavior," American Sociological Review 39 (February 1974), 101-112.

[8] Bernard Roshco, Newsmaking, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). See also Leon Sigal, Reporters and Officials, (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 1973), Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," American Journal of Sociology 77 (January 1972), 660-679.

[9] Clarice N. Olien, Phillip J. Tichenor and George A. Donohue, "Media Coverage and Social Movements" in Charles T. Salmon, ed. Information Campaigns: Balancing Social Values and Social Change (Newbury Park, Calif: Sage, 1989), 151. See also Lauren Kessler, "The Ideas of Woman Suffragists and the Portland *Oregonian*," Journalism Quarterly 57 (Winter 1980), 597-605.

[10] Marvin Olasky and Susan Olasky, "The Crossover in Newspaper Coverage of Abortion from Murder to Liberation," Journalism Quarterly 63 (Spring, 1986), 31-37.

A study of newspaper coverage of the Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion examined the relationship between media agendas and local community structures.[11] John Pollock, James Robinson and Mary Murray tested the variation in coverage by using the idea of "legitimizing" or "delegitimizing" coverage of abortion and the Supreme Court decision. They found that there was no evidence of a national agenda. Instead, there was variation dependent on the local socioeconomic and community structures. Legitimizing coverage was associated with areas of high poverty, high black populations, low Catholic populations, and a high demand for abortions. The authors were able to categorize coverage as legitimizing or delegitimizing by looking at key concepts in the content of the articles.

A review of the literature found no scholarly study that has been done specifically on the framing of the abortion issue in the 1980's, although the issue of biased coverage has been researched. An October, 1989 study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs measured news coverage of the abortion issue in 1989 by analyzing the coverage given to sources for each side of the controversy during the year.[12] A July, 1990 *Los Angeles Times* survey looked at a wide range of coverage in television and newspaper reports in the 1989-90 period.[13]

The Center for Media and Public Affairs study found an edge for the pro-choice position in the number of sources used. This was determined by counting the number of times advocates were cited. However, those numbers exclude, on the pro-life side, sources such as President Bush and pro-life Supreme Court Justices, who are put in separate categories. The study also found a gender gap in reporting, with female reporters more heavily favoring the pro-choice position, as measured by sources used. That gender gap is noted both in print and broadcast media. A look at terms used for the pro-choice and pro-life campaigns found a difference between print and television, with television favoring the pro-choice camp. But this analysis does not address the problem of how the issue was framed in terms of women's rights. It does not measure changes in framing over time. It also does not address the issue of the relationship between the framing of news coverage of an issue, and the social movements that relate to that issue.

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[11] John Pollock, James Robinson and Mary Murray, "Media Agendas and Human Rights: The Supreme Court Decision on Abortion," Journalism Quarterly 55 (Autumn, 1978), 544-548.

[12] Robert Lichter and Linda Lichter, eds, "Roe v. Webster: Media Coverage of the Abortion Debate," Media Monitor 3 (October, 1989).

[13] David Shaw, "Covering Abortion Fairly," San Francisco Chronicle (July 9, 1990), B3. This article is a shortened version of a series by Shaw published in the Los Angeles Times.

The *Los Angeles Times* survey by media critic David Shaw does address the current framing issue. Shaw found that in 18 months preceding July, 1990, the newspapers, newsmagazines and network news programs have generally framed the issue to favor abortion rights advocates. In describing the pro-choice bias, Shaw cites language, images, number of sources, and play given to events.[14] Shaw's survey was not meant to be scientific, and he was not looking for differences among media.[15] Rather, he observed coverage of the national network television newscasts and several nationally prominant newspapers that he felt was representative and extensively interviewed activists and journalists. Shaw takes note of language supporting the rights of the woman rather than the fetus, and of the designation of those opposed to abortion as "anti-abortion" and those in favor of abortion rights as "pro-choice." Shaw also offers examples of biased coverage. His analysis is especially concerned with journalists' pro-choice views interfering with balanced reporting. However, the results of Shaw's survey are not systematically presented. The relationship of social/political changes to the language used is not examined. The differences among the media are not examined. And the changes that have occurred over time are not examined. Those issues need to be addressed by systematically analyzing newsframing of the abortion issue over time.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Telephone interview with Shaw, July 17, 1990.

Journalists' observations from the middle of the 1980's show a different perspective than that available to Shaw in 1990. In the early 1980's, the anti-abortion movement was viewed by journalists as losing momentum.[16] But by 1985 things had changed. The pro-choice movement was on the defensive.[17] Even the pro-life activists agreed that the media, at least the television network newscasts, were giving them everything they wanted.[18]

> Pro-lifers credit the constant picketing of Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro last fall with helping to turn the tide on TV coverage - for it put abortion protests on firm political ground. And then, with two big stories - the bombing of abortion clinics, which gave them a platform, and the release of [the film] "The Silent Scream," which presented an actual abortion in scientific terms - they finally brought the debate where they wanted it: "squarely into people's living rooms."[19]

Another writer adds a preceding event to that list. The NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund found the first major change in media attention came with a speech by President Ronald Reagan in 1984. He announced his anti-abortion position to a meeting of religious broadcasters "which turned the White House press corps into a de facto force against legal abortion."[20]

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[16] Kalter, 7.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] Ibid., 12.

[20] Media Report to Women (July-August, 1986), 7. Citing an article by Jo Campbell in New Directions for Women (May-June, 1986).

Social underpinnings of abortion

Feminist literature on social underpinnings of the abortion issue is informative for understanding the framing of news coverage, and for understanding what is left out. The pro-life movement is often presented as a single-issue movement. But a study in the early 1980's found that members of pro-life organizations often had links with other issues.

> Right to Lifers have alliances and linkages to anti-ERA and conservative, anti-government, anti-gun control, and other right-wing forces.[21]

The population of anti-abortion supporters may have changed since then, and the media may have played a role in that change through its framing of the issue. One of the most significant influences on creating the latter 1980's framing was likely in response to the release of the anti-abortion film, "The Silent Scream" in 1985. Rosalind Petchesky says the release of the film transformed the anti-abortion argument from a mainly religious one, to a medical mode, and brought the fetal image to life; that the strategy was to create fetal personhood by self-fulfilling prophecy through a public presence of the fetus.[22] Joanmarie Kalter (1985), too, has noted that the real success of the pro-life forces in this campaign was to make abortion not only a religious issue, but a scientific one. "Network news thus paid it more attention, and in so doing, took a decided tilt to their side."[23] In addition, video copies of the film went to all members of Congress, and portions of it were played on all three nightly network newscasts.[24]

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[21] Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley, Women and Public Policies (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 145.

[22] Rosalind Pollack Patchesky, "Fetal Images: The Power of Visual Culture in the Politics of Reproduction." Feminist Studies 13 (Summer 1987), 264.

[23] Kalter, 8.

[24] Jane D. Brown, Cynthia S. Waszak and Kim Walsh Childers, "Family Planning, Abortion and AIDS: Sexuality and Communication Campaigns," in Charles T. Salmon, ed.

While anti-abortion activists concentrated on the fetal image, pro-choice activists understood the result of such framing. Faye Wattleton of Planned Parenthood calls the attack on abortion and family planning as a whole, an anti-woman stance. For her, reproductive freedom reflects on other issues as well. "If we can't take charge of this most personal aspect of our lives, we can't take care of anything."[25]

Jane Brown, Cynthia Waszak and Kim Childers write that the battle goes back a century. Feminists were concerned about the health and welfare of mothers and children. But the Victorian-era moralists opposed birth control and abortion as immoral because those practices allowed sexual intercourse without procreation. The battle now, they say, is essentially about the role of women in contemporary society.[26] The pro-lifers are afraid of undermining the role of motherhood. The argument boils down to the rights of the woman versus the rights of the fetus.

Joyce Gelb and Marian Palley (1982) write that until the mid-nineteenth century, abortion was widely accepted in the United States. They attribute the laws that made abortion criminal during the nineteenth century to the actions of professional physicians concerned that they would lose patients to non-professionals doing abortions. They, too, see the abortion issue as having an underlying theme of sexual politics. They write, "The essence of power relationships in society may be at stake in the abortion issue."[27] For pro-choicers it is a matter of rights, not morality.

Information Campaigns: Balancing Social Values and Social Change (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1989), 96-97.

[25] Faye Wattleton quoted in "Repro Woman", MS (October 1989), 50.

[26] Brown, 93-94.

[27] Gelb, 125.

There is evidence that news printed about feminist issues is often marked by conflict and negativity.[28] Both the 1985 coverage surrounding abortion, and the 1989 coverage are of issues with deep conflict at their core. It could be that the conflict presented by the resurgence of pro-life activity would lead to greater coverage of the issue. It is also likely that the content of that coverage would be about the conflict rather than underlying issues.

Rationale and purpose of this study

The findings of the Center for Media and Public Affairs do not address issues of legitimizing language of women's rights or other framing factors. The Center's report shows only an edge in the number of pro-choice sources. Shaw's survey does address the issue of framing, but not in a systematic or historical way. In the 1980's, it was the pro-lifers who brought the issue of abortion into the forefront of news coverage. It was the pro-life imagery that gave the issue a new frame. It is those images, and the changes in abortion images over time that have yet to be studied.

In the same ways that the anti-abortion campaign gained framing ascendancy, the pro-choice effort may now be dominating. It is the relationship between social-political events, and the framing of the issue that can begin to be understood by analyzing news framing. How was coverage of the abortion issue framed in 1985? How did the coverage change, if indeed it did change, in the latter part of 1989? Has there been a gender gap in framing by reporters? A start can be made in answering these questions by analyzing the content of the news coverage.

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[28] Anne Cooper and Lucinda Davenport, "Newspaper Coverage of the International Women's Decade: Feminism and Conflict," Journal of Communication Inquiry 11 (Winter, 1987), 108-115.

In analyzing print media, the language used is the most important indication of framing. Concepts that can best be made manifest can best be studied quantitatively. The Pollock, Robinson and Murray study used concepts of content to address the framing of abortion. Concepts considered legitimizing were "legal, competent, cooperative, stable, peaceful, progressive non-exploitive, and/or moral."[29] Concepts considered delegitimizing were "illegal, uncooperative, threatening, disunited, leaderless, arrogant, conflictive, oppressive, unintelligent, and/or immoral."[30]

After 16 years of being legal, the appropriate language concepts have shifted. The social and political activity and rhetoric have given a new aspect to the issue. The morality issue is still salient. But other issues have changed. Competence and leadership are less likely to be at issue. One of the issues dominating the rhetoric has been that of fetal development, and of the question of when life begins. Labels have changed as well, and some have become important. For example, "Right-to-life" and "Pro-life" have been the labels developed by the group opposing abortion. Those favoring legalization have been calling themselves "Pro-choice." Those against legalized abortion have concentrated their campaigns on the fate of the fetus, and the obligation of women to carry fetuses to term. Those in favor of legalization have concentrated their campaigns on the fate of women, and of women's control over their lives. The morality issue is intertwined with the fetal versus women issue, and may include a religious aspect. Those opposed to legalized abortion will refer to it as immoral or murder. Those in favor of legalized abortion do not frame their argument in terms of the fetus or its fate. The appearance of these issues and labels, then, can be studied as elements of framing in the news media.

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[29] Pollock, Robinson and Murray, 545
[30] Ibid, 546.

Behind the labels, the underlying meanings of these issues are related to basic power issues for women. The fact that the "pro-life" groups have links with those who defeated the Equal Rights Amendment points to the issue underlying the battle over abortion -- that of equality for women. It is not just the right to choose abortion that is being battled through the cultural medium of news. It is the right of women to have control over their lives. The fact that the news media exert a powerful influence over our cultural definitions suggests that these news frames of the abortion issue can have far-reaching consequences for images of women in society, and for the role of women in society. Research into this issue, therefore, can illuminate those images. The research can then add to that body of knowledge that can be used to reduce gender inequities.

The framing of the abortion issue has taken place in the context of social actions undertaken to influence the status of abortion. That framing is related to other issues of women's power. Given the information from the literature, this study seeks to determine whether there was a change of framing related to social and political activity between 1985 and 1989, and whether framing is also related to other community factors.

METHOD

Sample

For this preliminary study, the *Eugene Register Guard* and the *New York Times* coverage were used for analysis. The *Eugene Register Guard* was chosen for several reasons. The newspaper is a member of the Associated

Press and subscribes to the *Los Angeles Times* service, the *New York Times* service, and the *Washington Post* service. It therefore has access to most of the national services in addition to generating all its own local coverage. The *Eugene Register Guard* is the only daily in the Eugene-Springfield area. It is the second largest newspaper in the state of Oregon.[31] The Eugene-Springfield area has well-organized groups of both pro-life and pro-choice activists. The *New York Times* was chosen as a newspaper with a national influence for the follow-up study. It is also a major newspaper in its own region.

Because his research aimed to determine if there is a relationship between pertinent societal events and framing of the abortion issue, it was necessary to choose time periods of coverage in which there were nation-wide social events. These periods would also assure some coverage of the abortion issue.

All articles and editorials dealing with the abortion issue that appeared in the *Eugene Register Guard* and the *New York Times* from two different time periods were analyzed. The period of January 1, 1985 to February 28, 1985 was chosen because of the wave of abortion clinic bombings and the release of the film *The Silent Scream* . Nationally, that period was marked by increased discussion of the issue. The period of June 1, 1989 and July 31, 1989 was chosen because of the *Webster* decision of July 3, 1989, which generated much publicity of the issue both before and after the decision was made public. Editorial and news stories were both included because the object of this study was to see if framing of the issue from any of this newspapers pages changed relative to societal events.

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[31] Marketing Opportunities in Eugene-Springfield, Lane County Oregon (Eugene, Oregon: *The Register Guard* , 1988.) *R-G* figures claim a 61 % saturation of the metropolitan Lane county area. The report says the newspaper is read by nearly equal numbers of professionals, homemakers and laborers. 95% of the readers are white, and 50% have had some college education.

These two time periods yielded a total sample of 53 articles from the *R-G* and 116 articles from the *NYT*..

Units of Analysis and Coding Categories

The unit of analysis was the newspaper article or column. Because the dependent variable to be measured was "framing" of abortion stories, eight elements of the stories that could contribute to framing were coded. Each of these elements was broken down into categories for coding. The independent variable was the date of the article. The dependent variables were coded as follows.

Gender of the writer was coded. This category had the potential of showing a possible change in those covering the abortion "beat." In addition, it can be analyzed as an independent variable in relation to other variables.

Placement was coded, to see if the issue was considered front section, front page material, or was to be found in another section. A change in placement of abortion articles over time could indicate the assessment of the importance of the issue.

Terms used to refer to both the abortion rights group and the anti-abortion group were each coded by whether the terms were those favored and used by their respective campaigns, or those used by the opposition. Terms used by either the writer or a quoted source were coded. Those in favor of legalized abortion tend to refer to themselves as pro-choice, or alternatively, refer to abortion rights. Included in this coding also were references to groups as opposed to abortion restrictions, or advocates of family planning. Those against legalized abortion call themselves pro-life, or refer to their cause as a right-to-life issue. Conversely, the terms the groups would call each other tend to be pro-abortion, and anti-abortion or anti-choice. Which of these terms is used contributes to the framing of a story.

One of the most basic differences between the two sides in the abortion debate is whether the woman's rights or the fetus's rights are considered paramount. Coding for this was determined by the mention of certain concepts, by either the writer or a quoted source. Sources were included because what is chosen to be quoted also contributes to the framing of an article. The article was considered to have presented the viewpoint of women's rights if it mentioned women's rights, the privacy of reproductive decisions, control over reproductive decisions, the right to choose abortion, the fact of the legality of abortion, or the dangers of illegal abortions to women. The article was considered to have presented the viewpoint of fetal rights if it specifically mentioned the rights of the fetus, or if it made reference to the killing of babies, the taking of a life, or protecting the unborn. A category was provided for those articles that included both, which it was assumed would occur with some frequency, since sources from both sides of the issue are often quoted.

A related category is that of the morality orientation of the article. Generally only the pro-life side brings up the issue of morality as grounds for public discussion. It is part of their framing of the issue, and not part of the framing of the pro-choice side. The articles were coded for references to abortion as a moral issue if they included discussion or quotations referring to abortion as immoral or as murder. References to invoking God or praying in the course of or in defense of anti-abortion activities also were coded as having a morality orientation.

The anti-abortion campaign of the 1980's included an effort to gain acceptance for the idea that "human life" begins at conception. A discussion of that issue contributes to the framing of the anti-abortion argument. Articles were coded for whether or not the writer or a quoted source made reference to when life begins.

The articles were also coded for whether there was a discussion of the fetus, and if so, what terms were used. Coding distinguished between use of the word fetus, and use of the terms "unborn baby" or "unborn child." The coding also included a category for use of both forms of terminology in the article.

Reliability

Reliability was assessed by a test-retest method. The *Register-Guard* and the *New York Times* articles were coded at two different time periods, and the reliability tests were run independently. Ten of the 53 *Register-Guard* articles were retested. Reliability of each category was 100 percent except for the category of "terms for pro-life." This category tested at 90 percent reliability because of an oversight of a term on one of the readings.

Twenty of the *New York Times* 116 articles were retested. Reliability of six of the eight categories was 100 percent. The "morality orientation" variable retested at 90 percent reliability. The differences arose out of language in the articles that was not as specific as the coding guide. The two cases where the coding was not the same in the retest were assessments of quoted remarks that were not as explicit as those coded for morality in most cases.

The other category that did not test at 100 percent was the "rights orientation" at 85 percent reliability. The problem in the case of the "rights" category arose from the decision on when to apply it. On first reading the three articles in question were judged to be not applicable to that category. The articles were about: a judge halting plans for a clinic; the specific state politics of the abortion battle in Minnesota; the medical explanation of fetal viability. On retesting, the articles were put into rights categories based on, respectively: a quote about constitutional rights; a reference to the era of the right to abortion; a reference to fetal viability. It is possible that these were not unique cases, but present a real reliability problem. However, the problem seems to lie in the area of what constitutes the rights issue. There were no reliability problems in terms of coding between the applicable categories within that element.

RESULTS

For each variable, the percentages were compared between 1985 and 1989, for the *Register-Guard* and the *New York Times* (see Table 1 and Table 2). The comparisons need to be analyzed both for their change over time in each newspaper individually, and for their comparative values. Table 1 shows the results for each variable. Results from the *Register-Guard* are presented first. The first column shows the results from 1985, and the second from 1989. Figures for the *New York Times* are shown next to those for the *Register-Guard*. For each variable, change over time and differences between newspapers can be read. Table 2 shows the adjusted percentages in the same configuration. Both tables are included because for some variables, the number of NA's (not applicable) is important to the analysis of the results.

The ways in which the two papers are similar give support to the thesis that the framing of the abortion issue went through specific changes between the era of *The Silent Scream* and the era of the *Webster* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. The ways in which the two papers are different support the thesis that local papers are affected by other community structures.

Gender of writer

The *Register-Guard* relies on wire service reports for a large proportion of its articles. The local staff covers Oregon news, with a corespondent in Washington, D.C. The figures from Table 1 for the category of gender of the writer reflect the fact that articles about abortion were not considered byline material in 1985. 82% of the stories had no byline. In spite of active local groups on both sides of the issue, there was no local byline coverage. What was run from the services was also usually without a byline. The nine percent figures for both female and male come mainly from columns. There were two articles by women - syndicated columns by Ellen Goodman and Mary McGrory. There were two articles by men - a syndicated column by Tom Wicker, and an article from the *Los Angeles Times* about clinic bombers. Table 1 shows that in 1989 this changed to some extent. The articles from the services often carried a byline, most often a male byline. The only local articles were by a single male reporter. Many of those artices with bylines were columns - mostly by men. Those by women included two Ellen Goodman columns, an article from the *New York Times* and one from the *Washington Post.*

The Table 1 figures from the *New York Times* provide more gender information. The majority of articles (56%) carried a byline in 1985. In 1989 that figure jumped to 71% - probably an indication of increased importance given by editors. Table 2 gives more information about the proportion of male to female writers. While Table 1 shows that both genders increased bylines compared to articles without bylines, Table 2 shows that in 1985 in the *NYT*, the number of female bylines was less than two thirds of the number of male bylines. In 1989, female bylines increased to more than three quarters of the number held by men. (Because of the extremely small N for the *Register-Guard,* a comparison can't be made.)

Placement

Placement of articles indicates a similar barometer of increased importance given to the issue by newspapers. In both the *Register Guard* and the *New York Times*, there was an increase in front page placement. Table 2 shows the percentages were greater for the local Eugene paper, probably because of the greater amount and variety of news in the national paper. But Table 1 shows that in 1989, the *R-G* had an increase in stories not considered front section material. They were mainly wire service stories about the abortion issue in the state.

Terms for pro-choice and terms for pro-life

The terms used for pro-choice groups indicate a change over time. Table 1 shows that in both the *Register-Guard* and the *New York Times* total references to abortion rights activists go up in 1989, while the percentage of articles for which such terms are not applicable goes down. The issue has become more focused. The likely reason for the number of "not applicable" articles being higher in the *New York Times* than the *Register-Guard* has to do with the fact that so many more issues and events are covered (e.g. the U. S. witholding funds from the U.N. population fund because China sponsors abortion) that have no direct reference to the pro-choice issue in the U.S. But in 1989 a greater number of the articles did directly address the issue.

Table 1 illustrates that for the terms for "pro-life," the percentage of "NA's" goes down for the *New York Times* but not for the *Register-Guard*. In this category, another factor appears. Total use of the term "pro-life" decreases, as use of the term "anti-abortion" increases. This is true for both newspapers. (In the *R-G* the exclusive use of the "pro-life" term stays about the same, but that, together with the combination category, shows a decrease.) One of the reasons that there is a difference between the two papers, is that in the stories about the clinic bombings, the *NYT* often framed the articles without reference to the activity as pro-life (or anti-abortion). The *R-G* on the other hand used wire service stories that did use such designations.

When sorting out the meaning of the results of the terms used for both pro-choice and anti-abortion causes, Table 1 and Table 2 both need to be taken into account because of the importance of the NA's. In both cases and in both time frames, the percentage of NA's is higher in the *NYT* than in the *R-G*. Also, for each time period, for each newspaper, the NA's are higher for the pro-choice than the anti-abortion terms. This reflects the fact that, first of all, as noted above, the *NYT* covered many abortion-related items that it did not frame in the context of the pro-choice/anti-abortion issue. Secondly, even when the article was framed as such an issue, there were more likely to be references to the anti-abortion side than the pro-choice side.

Rights Orientation

Table 1 shows that in the the category of "rights orientation" there were several changes over time. Both newspapers showed a drop in the percentage of those articles that did not make some reference to the issue. In other words, the framing of the articles shifted to a focus on the rights issue. There was a drop in the percentage of those articles that referred only to fetal rights, and an increase in those that referred only to women's rights. An increase in the percentage of stories with references to both indicates that the issue of rights is more focused in 1989. In this category, a difference between the two newspapers is evident, with women's rights showing a greater percentage in the *NYT* in 1985. However, that changes in 1989. The adjusted figures for the variable in Table 2 clearly show the distribution change for women's rights is especially strong for the *R-G*.

Both newspapers show a large decrease in an exclusive fetal rights orientation. Table 2 illustrates that the *NYT* shows a proportionate increase in those articles expressing both rights issues, indicating the importance of the rights question to the framing of the issue. Here it is important to keep in mind the event factors of the two time periods. In 1985, many of the reports were in response to anti-abortion activities. The perpetrators of the bombings always talked about fetal rights. These comments were generally included in the articles. Had an article mentioned the legality of abortion, or a woman's right to go to an abortion clinic, women's rights would also have been included in the framing. But in many cases, the newspapers did not do this. The issue was not being framed as one of women's rights.

What about differences in coverage of the rights variable by men and women journalists? Table 3 illustrates that the results of this study indicate those differences are pronounced. When the gender of the writer is made the independent variable and the rights orientation of the articles the dependent variable, the numbers reveal an interesting pattern. If all the articles are treated as one group, the adjusted figures show a large difference in orientation. Those articles addressing the rights issue written by women clearly give more expression to women's rights. Those written by men are more evenly divided. When the two time periods are taken separately, the figures are more striking. In 1985, the articles written by women show an emphasis on women's rights issues. But the articles written by men show a clear emphasis on fetal rights. That's a sharp contrast to the figures for 1989. While women writers were even more consistently writing about the women's rights issues, articles written by men show a substantial change from 1985. In 1989, male writers covered women's rights issues, but they were also more likely to raise issues of fetal rights as well. There are some limiting factors with the available figures. First, the N is in some cases fairly small, and that raises some question about the validity of the results. Second, the NA category is larger for women's articles. But given the framing consistency shown for articles by women, and the turnaround by men in light of social and political changes, it is an issue that is certainly worth further study.

Morality orientation

Table 1 shows that this category produced results pointing to quite different coverage by the two newspapers. The *Register-Guard* articles in 1985 contained moral or religious references in a majority of cases. That changed considerably by 1989. But in the *New York Times* moral and religious references, while they declined slightly over the time period in question, were never that high.

When life begins

The discussion of "when life begins" is never a major factor in either time period. In the *NYT* the limited discussion appears in 1985 in reference to the anti-abortion film *The Silent Scream* . In 1989 in the *NYT* the issue appears only after the *Webster* decision, and then only in articles concerning that decision.

Terms for fetus

The category of the fetus gives information about news framing on two levels. The first is the fact that there is discussion about the fetus at all. Comparing 1985 to 1989 in Table 1, both newspapers show in increase in the total discussion about the fetus. This may in part be an indication of the success of the anti-abortion forces in putting the fetus on the media agenda. It is certainly also a reflection of the fact that the *Webster* decision specifically refers to the fetus. But what is more dramatic is the change that occurs in the other terms used. Table 2 illustrates the degree of change in terminology. Many articles from 1985 contain references (almost always quotes) to unborn children. The number drops in both newspapers in 1989. It is unlikely that the number of anti-abortion activists using the term dropped, but the coverage of their position, and the number of quotes did, indicating a change in the framing of the issue. In the *R-G*, in 1985, references to unborn babies were more common than references to fetuses by a substantial margin. In the *NYT* it was a draw. The *NYT* also had far fewer references to fetuses at all, a fact probably related to the newspaper's orientation towards women's rights. In 1989, the term fetus had won out in both newspapers, and both newspapers had a decreased percentage of articles without some fetal reference. The *R-G* still had a higher proportion of references to unborn babies than the *NYT*. But in either case, fetal personhood was brought to life.

DISCUSSION

Every article must frame an issue in some way. Because of reporter routines, some of the framing takes place by virtue of the tendency toward coverage of events, rather than discussion of issues. In this way, those who "stage" the news can have a lot of influence over how it is presented. Reporters also can put controversial terms in quotes, to maintain the stance of objectivity.[32] But even in quotes, terms and concepts can influence the framing of an issue. Space and time factors also influence the routines of coverage, adding to the tendency to cover events rather than issues. But even given these built-in tendencies, the choice of words and concepts is significant to the presentation of an issue. Words carry symbolic force. How an issue is presented conveys what matters. Covering the activities of the anti-abortion activists in the 1980's translated into framing the issue in their terms.

In examining the selection of articles from two time periods, a pattern emerges in the coverage of the abortion issue. In the terms used and the rights orientation, there is a clear shift toward a pro-choice oriented framing. At the same time, in studying these selections in two different types of newspaper -- a local small city Oregon paper, and a major nationally distributed paper located in New York city -- another pattern emerges pointing to some differences between them. These differences support the thesis of the Pollock, Robinson and Murray (1978) study of *Roe v. Wade* that there is not a "national agenda" in media coverage. Rather, there is a variation that is dependent on local community structures.

Several results point to the shift toward a pro-choice framing. The greater use of abortion rights terms in 1989 is one. This can be only partially attributed to greater activity of the pro-choice forces, and consequent event reportage. The change in terminology is not only true when abortion-rights advocates have made public statements. It is also true in issue coverage. In

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[32] See Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology*, 77 (January 1972), 660-679.

1985, a large percentage of the stories were about clinic bombings. The anti-abortionists were often quoted without writers discussing the bombings in the context of a larger issue that would entail expressing the pro-choice position. In 1989, the larger issue was itself taken up by the newspapers. The terms "anti-abortion" or "anti-choice" appeared in over half the articles, even though the "events" were not being controlled by activists.

Measuring the citation of these terms has its limitations. It cannot demonstrate the sense the reader receives from the total article. Yet it can provide an indication of changes. In 1985, newspapers reported the events propagated by the anti-abortion forces and quoted them, often with no word from a pro-choice advocate. The absence of that pro-choice perspective in itself is indicative of the fact that social and political realities (such as Ronald Reagan's support) can affect journalistic coverage. There were always pro-choice advocates to talk to. But the issue wasn't viewed in those terms. In 1989, that changed. The findings of the previously discussed Center for Media and Public Affairs study (1989), and the *Los Angeles Times* survey (Shaw, 1990) are supported. Media coverage seems to have swung toward a pro-choice framing.

The change becomes especially clear in an analysis of the results of the variable of "rights orientation." The results show increases between 1985 and 1989 in percentages of articles in both newspapers that refer only to women's rights being involved in the abortion battle. There is also a concomitant decrease in the percentages of articles referring to the issue only as one of fetal rights. And there is a drop in the percentage of articles to which the "rights" orientation question does not apply. An increase in those articles expressing both rights issues reflects the focusing of the question. Yet there were also differences between the newspapers. The *R-G* was more oriented toward the right-to-lifers in 1985. Here community standards probably had an important impact on the framing of the issue.

In 1989, framing in terms only of the fetus virtually disappeared in both papers. It does not seem that this is simply a result of the difference in news events. While it is true the pro-choice forces were galvanized, the anti-abortion forces were as well. Given the content of the Missouri law, there might have been greater discussion about fetal issues at the expense of women's issues. But in 1989, journalists were quicker to pick up on the women's rights issues. While this may offer comfort to those concerned with pro-choice issues, it raises a concern that journalists did not explore these questions in 1985, when the President was championing the rights of the fetus. Political activity in 1989 may have helped to legitimize the pro-choice cause in the media. But the battle for legitimation is an ongoing process. Since legalized abortion threatens the social fiber of traditional female roles, that battle can be expected to continue.

The differences in this study between female and male writers is substantial. These results would lend support to the results of the study published by the Center for Media and Public Affairs. That study found a similar gender gap in abortion reporting in 1989 as measured by the number of sources quoted from each side of the debate. The study used television reports (the three network newscasts) as well as newspaper articles (*New York Times* and *Washinton Post*), but did not study any previous time period. The study found that the *NYT* had overall the most pro-choice coverage by their measurements. *NBC News* was the only news outlet they found to favor the pro-life sources. They also found television more event driven than the newspapers. While the current study was not able to include the network newscasts, that is clearly an area that needs to be pursued.

While the *NYT* may have a pro-choice balance in its coverage, the *R-G* has shown more variation. The results in the morality category were especially divergent. One reason may be that Eugene, Oregon is a city with large Christian fundamentalist and moderate sized Catholic communities. The anti-abortion movement is well-organized. It could be that the same factors that affected the Pollock, Robinson and Murray study were at work here. Yet in 1989, there is a substantial decrease of moral references in the *R-G*. This could indicate an especially strong change in framing.

One of the major markers of abortion issue framing is the fetal issue. The anti-abortion film *The Silent Scream* brought fetal images into the nation's livingrooms, as it was screened by all three network news programs and several talk shows. Anti-abortion demonstrators carried fetal pictures. The rise of fetal personhood had a profound affect on how the debate about abortion was conducted. Issues of fetal personhood have persisted, even as the discussion of women's rights has come back into the debate. But women's rights have come into the forefront of the debate. Moral references have declined in the coverage. There have been changes in the framing of the issue. Perhaps the end of the Reagan era had an effect on the coverage. The legitimation his support had given the pro-life forces in the eyes of journalists may have ended with his departure. Certainly the mobilization of the pro-choice forces in the face of the threat from *Webster* had an effect. And the political fallout has had an effect on framing as well. Since the latest pro-choice mobilization, the Center for Media and Public Affairs study and the *Los Angeles Times* survey have found that news coverage frames the issue in a pro-choice way. Where were the surveys during the previous five years? The fact that pro-lifers have become upset with news coverage may in itself indicate that a framing change has indeed taken place.

The information presented in this study is formative. But the evidence seems to justify the further study of framing changes in relation to political and social changes. If frames are regarded as symbols for what exists and what matters, as Tuchman and Gitlin suggest, the abortion issue is rich with symbols of how women as a group are regarded in terms of power. Continuing study of coverage of the abortion issue could offer information about how the media are affected by political legitimation of positions, and how the news media interact with social movements and participate in social change. Specifically, such studies can illuminate the role the media play in influencing the position of women, and their power of self-determination.

This study did not even touch on the visual aspects of the abortion issue campaigns, and that area needs to be studied. Weekly newsmagazines could provide some information for study. But the best visual source is the national network news. This is especially true because the same broadcasts are seen across the country, and a total picture of framing can be more easily achieved. People depend more on television for their news than on newspapers, so television coverage is most important to look at. Other time periods need also to be looked at. The political campaigns of 1984, 1986 and 1988 would provide additional information about a relationship between the Reagan Presidency and the framing of the abortion issue.

Finally, while the results of this study provide an indication that framing changes have occurred, the simple coding of terms cannot provide a full sense of how the status of women's rights is being presented. A semiotic study of text and of visual images in the news coverage could perhaps reveal many other subtleties of sign and symbol. Yet no textual analysis can provide information on how people are actually perceiving the information presented. Future studies should not only use qualitative tools to look at the implicit assumptions underlying the definition that the news media give to the issue, but should also examine the perceptions of those who read the newspapers and watch the television coverage. Interviews with journalists, activists, and readers/viewers would all provide meaningful information. Events are sure to provide many opportunities for the study of news coverage as hearings take place to fill a Supreme Court seat, and several states engage in election campaigns for abortion-related measures.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Abortion Stories in 1985 and 1989
Eugene Register Guard and *New York Times*

	R-G		*NYT*	
	1985 (N=22)	**1989** (N=31)	**1985** (N=52)	**1989** (N=64)
Gender of writer				
Female	9 % *	13 %	21 %	30 %
Male	9	52	33	38
Both/can't tell	0	0	2	3
No Byline	82	35	44	30
Placement				
Front Page	18	29	8	14
Editorial	18	29	8	11
First section, not page 1	55	23	60	61
Other	9	19	25	14
Terms for pro-choice				
Pro-choice or abortion rights	45	61	21	31
Pro-abortion or anti-life	0	3	2	3
Combination	0	0	0	11
NA	55	35	77	55
Terms for pro-life				
Pro-life or right-to-life	9	10	8	3
Anti-abortion or anti-choice	41	52	27	53
Combination	23	10	13	8
NA	27	29	52	36
Rights orientation				
Women's rights	5	42	21	33
Fetal rights	23	6	17	3
Both	23	35	8	27
NA	50	16	54	38
Morality orientation				
Moral/religious reference	59	26	23	17
No moral reference	41	74	77	83
When life begins				
Reference to issue	14	13	4	14
No reference	86	87	96	86
Terms for fetus				
Fetus	14	35	13	25
Unborn baby	32	19	13	8
Both	5	0	2	6
NA	50	45	71	61

* Percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Adjusted Percentages 1985 and 1989, *Eugene Register Guard* and *New York Times*

	R-G		*N Y T*	
	1985 (N=22)	**1989** (N=31)	**1985** (N=52)	**1989** (N=64)
Gender of writer				
Female	50 % *	20 %	39 %	44 %
Male	50	80	61	56
	(N=4)	(N=20)	(N=28)	(N=43)
Placement				
Front page	20	36	10	16
Editorial	20	36	10	13
First secion, not page 1	60	28	80	71
	(N=20)	(N=25)	(N=39)	(N=55)
Terms for pro-choice				
Pro-choice or abortion rights	100	95	92	69
Pro-abortion or anti-life	0	5	8	7
Combination	0	0	0	24
	(N=10)	(N=20)	(N=12)	(N=29)
Terms for pro-life				
Pro-life or right-to-life	13	14	16	5
Anti-abortion or anti-choice	56	73	56	83
Combination	31	14	28	12
	(N=16)	(N=22)	(N=25)	(N=41)
Rights orientation				
Women's rights	9	50	46	53
Fetal rights	45	8	38	5
Both	45	42	17	43
	(N=11)	(N=26)	(N=24)	(N=40)
Morality orientation				
Moral/religious reference	59	26	23	17
No moral reference	41	74	77	83
	(N=22)	(N=31)	(N=52)	(N=64)
When life begins				
Reference to issue	14	13	4	14
No reference	86	87	96	86
	(N=22)	(N=31)	(N=52)	(N=64)
Terms for fetus				
Fetus	27	65	47	64
Unborn baby	64	35	47	20
Both	9	0	7	16
	(N=11)	(N=17)	(N=15)	(N=25)

* Percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number

TABLE 3

Rights orientation of abortion articles by gender of writer
Shown with full N and adjusted N

Table 3.1
1985 and 1989, *R-G* and *N Y T*

	Women 1985 & 89 *R-G & NYT* (N=36)	Adjusted (N=20)	Men 1985 & 89 *R-G & NYT* (N=59)	Adjusted (N=44)
Rights orientation				
Women's rights	39 %	70 %	31 %	41 %
Fetal rights	3	5	9	11
Both	14	25	36	48
NA	44		25	

Table 3.2
1985, *R-G* and *N Y T*

	Women 1985 *R-G & NYT* (N=13)	Adjusted (N=9)	Men 1985 *R-G & NYT* (N=19)	Adjusted (N=10)
Rights orientation				
Women's rights	46 %	67 %	11 %	20 %
Fetal rights	8	11	26	50
Both	15	22	16	30
NA	31		47	

Table 3.3
1989, *R-G* and *N Y T*

	Women 1989 *R-G & NYT* (N=23)	Adjusted (N=11)	Men 1989 *R-G & NYT* (N=40)	Adjusted (N=34)
Rights orientation				
Women's rights	35 %	73 %	40 %	47 %
Fetal rights	0	0	0	0
Both	13	27	45	53
NA	52		15	

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A CENSUS AND ANALYSIS OF JOURNALS PUBLISHING RESEARCH ABOUT MAGAZINES, 1977-1987

By

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Paper presented to the Magazine Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 1990 Annual Convention, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Funding for this research was provided in part by a Faculty Research Incentive Grant from Iowa State University. The primary author gratefully acknowledges the contributions made to data collection by Kellie Esch, undergraduate research assistant at Iowa State University, to colleagues professors Kim Smith and Janet Terry and the AEJMC paper referees.

A CENSUS AND ANALYSIS OF JOURNALS PUBLISHING RESEARCH ABOUT MAGAZINES, 1977-1987

The purpose of this study is to determine where research about magazines as a medium of communication is currently being published. Phillips (1989) reported the existence of a perception that research about magazines is not accessible. Gerlach (1987) has provided evidence that new magazine research fails to build on previous magazine research.

Reeves and Borgman (1983) have built on a growing body of literature to argue that bibliometric analysis can provide objective data to explore questions related to assessing the level of activity in communication research and communication specialties. They further argue that such data are useful for the publishers of the journals, the researchers seeking information about a new area of study as well as those who contribute to the journals (p. 122).

Thus, the question of where research about magazines as a medium of communication is published can be seen a methodological question of major importance to the growth both of the body of knowledge about magazines as a medium of communication as well as to the communications field as a whole.

The literature that focuses attention on applying standard research methods to both theoretical and methodological questions unique to communication research has increased with the growth of communication as a field of study (Westley and Stempel, 1981).

However, a review of this literature suggests that relatively little attention is given to methodological issues specific to research about magazines. This study seeks to identify patterns of publication of magazine research in the scholarly journals, both to contribute to meeting the need to make greater use of existing magazine research in new research and to contribute to the need to increase empirical research about magazines (Gerlach, 1987).

Schramm (1966) and Paisley (1972) have noted that the communication literature has historically been characterized by a phenomenon known as "information scatter." Schramm (1966) attributed the relative slow emergence of a "unified and systematic theory of human communication" to this problem. Observing from their review of the literature that "communication researchers must tolerate one of the worst cases of information scatter that can be found in the sciences," Reeves and Borgman (1983; p. 120) concluded from their subsequent analysis of data that the problem of information scatter was lessening in the larger body of communication literature.

Using citation network analysis, Reeves and Borgman (1983) identified nine journals as representing the core journals in communication; five journals formed a core for mass communication research (*Journalism Quarterly*, *Journal of Communication*, *Communication Research*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and *Journal of Broadcasting*). Reeves and Borgman's study was not medium-specific.

Garner and Dyer (1989) identified 99 scholarly journals in communication and related fields that publish reports of communication inquiry. Their listing includes titles of several medium-specific journals (e.g., newspaper, broadcast, advertising, public relations). They identify one journal that calls specifically for research about magazines. The Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History published in London, England, focuses on the history of both newspapers and periodicals. This journal is not reviewed by Communication Abstracts. It also does not appear to be included in the citation analyses provided in the Social Sciences Citation indexing reports or the Arts and Humanities Citation indexing reports.

Many scholars learn the key journals where research is published in their area of study while completing their graduate coursework. Others gain that knowledge when they conduct literature reviews prior to designing new studies in a field (Cooper, 1989). Gerlach (1987) suggests this typical progression may not occur for magazine scholars for several reasons: Relatively few universities include research about magazines in graduate coursework. Few magazine scholars are found on the faculties of communication programs, and of these, relatively few are social scientists. Finally, one of Gerlach's respondents noted the lack of published research about magazines and argued that this lack prevents new researchers from building on others' findings. When true, graduate students repeat the cycle: failing to learn where the literature is typically published and failing to cite earlier studies, even when those studies have been conducted.

Systematic studies designed to identify areas of research activity use a variety of techniques, such as citation network analysis, to help identify the fields of study and to "pinpoint the boundary between what we know and what we do not know" (Tankard et al., 1984, p. 89; Borgman and Paisley, 1989; Reeves and Bergman, 1982). Many of these studies assume either access to the published literature as the beginning point for inquiry or cross-fertilization of literature used in published research. If the sources for literature about a field or sub-field are not known, systematic inquiry must begin with a search for the literature (Cooper, 1989).

Contemporary researchers have available a number of sophisticated search technologies to assist with reviews of literature. As a result, a scholar's initial ignorance of sources for the existing literature does not usually pose an insurmountable barrier to identifying and reviewing literature prior to developing a new study. Indeed, not knowing specific journals where the desired materials are published can result in enriched research designs. It can be argued that ideally a researcher will cast the widest possible net to identify literature related to a proposed study rather than confining a review to journals with which the researcher is already familiar.

Here, too, a magazine scholar may encounter barriers. Computerized searches for literature on research about magazines, journals, periodicals and publishers will access research from every discipline and interdisciplinary field. Studies conducted in these fields that use magazines as a secondary source of data may focus on questions or use theoretical frameworks that are not communication-based or related. Communication Abstracts, one of the more concise and easily accessible search tools for exploring the communication literature, is not accessible through the major computerized search systems.

Phillips (1989) raised the question of the accessibility of magazine research literature. The present study uses Communication Abstracts as the data base. Not only do computerized bibliographic search systems not typically include Communication Abstracts but they are not yet universally available. Similarly Social Science Citation indices are typically available in large research university libraries but not always to scholars in smaller academic environments. This study's design assumes the data accessed through Communication Abstracts will be more widely available to experienced scholars and those new to the field. This index will also serve as a screen to magazine-based data that do not address communication questions.

This inquiry is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What scholarly journals publish non-proprietary, or academic, research about magazines as a medium of communication?
2. With what frequency does magazine research appear in those journals?

3. In what disciplinary or interdisciplinary journals does magazine research appear, if not in the journalism and mass communication journals ?

4. With what frequency over the past decade has research appeared?

Method

To answer these questions, a census was conducted of magazine research published in journals indexed by Communication Abstracts.(1) Data were compiled by hand, by recording all references to research about magazines indexed in Volumes 1 through 11. These volumes are dated from 1978 through 1988; citations lag by one year and span the eleven-year period from 1977 through 1987 (2).

Citations on research about magazines were identified by tracing research indexed under the keywords MAGAZINES, MAGAZINE ADVERTISING, MAGAZINE CONTENT, MAGAZINE HISTORY, MAGAZINE INDUSTRY, MAGAZINE MANAGEMENT, MAGAZINE READERSHIP, BLACK MAGAZINES, CHILDREN'S MAGAZINES; CITY MAGAZINES, COMPANY PUBLICATIONS, NEWSMAGAZINES, PERIODICAL, PERIODICAL INDICES, and POPULAR CULTURE.

Research indexed under specific countries and magazine titles was also included (BRITISH MAGAZINES, JAPANESE MAGAZINES, KOREAN MAGAZINES, and TIME, LADIES HOME JOURNAL).

The bibliographic citation and the abstract were recorded for all indexed research about magazines. Each citation was then analyzed and coded for 1) the journal in which the research was published, and 2) the year the cited research was published.

Finally, to determine whether research about magazines was published inside or outside the mainstream of journalism and mass communication journals, the identified journals were coded as to whether or not they were listed in The Iowa Guide: Scholarly Journals in Mass Communication and Related Fields (Garner and Dyer, 1989). Journals not listed in The Iowa Guide, were coded by discipline as indicated by the journal title.

Coding reliability was checked by a second coder. When discrepancies occurred, the first author determined whether the citation was included in the data.

"Research about magazines" was defined as scholarly inquiry using either qualitative or quantitative methodologies designed to explore any facet of the magazine as a form of mediated communication. Magazines were defined in both the broad and narrow sense: Research reports on all forms of general and specialized non-newspaper periodicals were included in the study. Because advertising is one form of information carried in the medium, research on advertising in magazines was included.

Findings

A total of 177 citations of research about magazines were identifed by Communication Abstracts as having been published in the 11-year period from 1977 through 1987. The 177 citations included 163 articles in 41 journals and monographs, and 14 books or chapters in books. For the purposes of this analysis, journals and monographs are treated as "journals." Books and chapters in books are treated as a separate category, and are labeled "Book citations" (See Table 1).

Of the 41 different journals, 14, or 34%, carried more than one report, for a total of 136 citations; the remaining 27 journals accounted for one citation each, and books accounted for the remaining 14 citations. Thus, 14 journals accounted for just over 83% of the 163 journal citations; 6 journals accounted for just over 70% of the journal citations (See Table 2).

Tables 3, 4a, and 4b show both collapsed data and a breakdown of journals by discipline, or "journal type." Just over half, 91, or 55.8%, of the journal citations were from journalism or communications journals (See Tables 3, 4a). Eleven advertising, marketing and business journals accounted for the next largest portion of citations (58, or 35.6%, of 163 citations). Two popular culture journals accounted for only 3 citations (1.8% of 163 citations). Nine journals accounted for 11 citations, or 6.8% of 163). These 9 journals were subject-specific, interdisciplinary journals or journals whose primary disciplinary roots are in sociology and psychology. The remaining 14 book citations were based in communication, advertising, popular culture and sociology or psychology (See Tables 3, 4b).

Of the communication journals, research about magazines was published most often by Journalism Quarterly (55 citations) and the Journal of Communication (11 citations) (See Table 4a).

Advertising, marketing and business journals accounted for

58 citations, or 35.6% of the 163 journal citations. Four of these journals carried more than 5 citations: Journal of Advertising Research (20); Journal of Advertising (17); Journal of the Market Research Society (6); and Current Issues and Research in Advertising (6), for a cumulative total of 49 citations (See Tables 3, 4b).

Fewer than half the journals, 19 or 46.4%, carrying magazine research are listed in The Iowa Guide ; 22, or 53.7%, are not. However, the 19 journals listed by The Iowa Guide carry just over 64% or 105 of the journal citations (See Tables 5, 6 and 7).

Table 8 provides a breakdown of all 177 citations by year. Only 2 citations were listed for 1977; 34 citations were given for 1986. The number of citations increased relatively steadily from 1977 through 1983, then leveled in the last four year, with the exception of 1986. Table 8 shows that seven years, 1977 to 1983, passed before the first half, 51.9% of the citations, were published, the last 4 years accounts for the remaining half.

Summary

Data were analyzed to answer four aspects of the question: Where is research about magazines as a medium of communication published?

During the 11-year period from 1977 through 1987, 41 different scholarly journals published 163 reports of non-proprietary research about magazines and journals. An additional 14 citations were published as books or or chapters in books.

Gerlach (1987, p. 178) noted that "magazine research appears relatively infrequently in publications in the field of journalism and mass communication." Hoever, this study showed that over half the research reports published during this period appeared in 19 of those journals. Thus the journalism and communication journals account for 91, or 56% of the 163 journal citations.

The next largest category of journals publishing magazine research was the advertising, marketing, and business journals, where 11 journals accounted for 58, or 35.6%, of the journal citations. Two popular culture journals and 9 interdisciplinary or discipline-specific journals accounted for 14, or 8.6%, of the remaining citations.

Furthermore, the data in this study indicate that magazine research appeared in Journalism Quarterly more frequently during this period than in any other journalism or commmunication journal indexed by Communication Abstracts. So, even though Gerlach (1987) found that research about magazines and journals represented only 6% of all the research reports (116 of 1,917 reports) published in Journalism Quarterly from 1977 to 1983, this study appears to confirm a respondent's observation that Journalism Quarterly is the "best forum" (Gerlach, 1987, p. 181) for publishing research about magazines as a medium of communication.

The data from this study also show The Journal of Communication, The Journal of Advertising Research, the Journal of Advertising, to have been among the more frequent publishers of magazine research during this period.

Citations were found in 4 of the 5 journals that Reeves and Borgman (1983) identified as core mass communication journals (Journalism Quarterly, Journal of Communication, Communication Research and Public Opinion Quarterly). Although the majority of citations were found in the communication and advertising or marketing journals, a substantial number of citations (58, or just over 35%) were in 22 journals that might be described as "outside the mainstream of the communication and related-field journals identified by Garner and Dyer (1989).

The study also showed that publication of magazine research has increased over the 11-year period.

Conclusions and Discussion

The data in this study suggest that research about magazines as a medium of communication is published in the scholarly journals of journalism and mass communication, advertising and business related fields as well as the communication-related disciplines of sociology and psychology, among others.

The study findings suggest that the magazine research literature is characterized by information scatter, even though Reeves and Borgman (1983) found the problem to be lessening in the larger body of communication literature.

The study does not attempt to explain why new research about magazines fails to build on existing research. The study also did not attempt to identify factors leading to the reported perception (Phillips, 1989) that non-proprietary magazine research is not available to scholars, However, information scatter may be a contributing factor to both problems.

The results of the study indicate that a sizable body of research about magazines as a medium of communication is accessible. The 91 journals identified in the study can be accessed in most major research libraries or through the interlibrary loan systems available in most libraries.

In his analysis of the early information scatter problem in the communication field, Schramm (1966) noted that communication scholars might continue for some time to find studies that did not build upon each other, but upon which they may build their new studies. Although other communication scholars may now enjoy a certain security that existing studies build on earlier research, magazine specialists may want to continue to cast wider literature review nets to capture studies that remain outside the networks of magazine research.

Gerlach (1987) urged greater publication of empirical studies on magazines. Academic institutions are also increasing pressure on magazine specialists to publish scholarly work (Fox, 1985). The finding of this study suggest there is a wide variety of opportunities for publication of magazine research.

However, the widely scattered nature of the existing research suggests that magazine specialists may want to add to the usual criteria for selecting a journal, an additional factor.

Whenever possible magazine specialists may want to consider ways they can contribute to the consolidation of the published magazine research.

The present study suggests there may be publication opportunities for magazine research that are not immediately apparent if magazine specialists rely solely on The Iowa Guide or Journalism Quarterly. However, among these are publication opportunities that could contribute to further fragmentation of the body of magazine research literature as well as journals in the core of communication literature that could be more fully tapped.

For example the successful publication in the Journal of Drug Education of research that explores the communication of information about drugs in teen magazines might place that research within the reach of scholars who have an interest in drug issues. However, it may simultaneously place the research outside the immediate reach of scholars interested in the communication phenomenon at the core of the research.

The finely tuned skill of making a right match between topic and periodical that the magazine freelancer brings to the academic community takes a different twist for the scholarly endeavor (Fox, 1985). Magazine scholars who complete the research cycle by publishing the results of their inquiry may want to give priority consideration to journals will transmit the results of their inquiries first to the larger communications community. Topical publication may obscure the "relatedness" of research for scholars designing new study (Cooper, 1989, p. 19)

There are several limitations on this study that should be noted.

The results of this study are based on a census of articles indexed in Communication Abstracts as magazine research. Thus, the reliability of the data are subject to the accuracy of the indexing process, as well as accuracy in the coding of the indexed citations. Literature about magazines as a medium of communication not so identified by Communication Abstracts indexers are not included in the study data. Two known reports on research about magazines published during this period (Bird, 1980; Showalter, 1978) were not listed in the Communication Abstracts. There may be other studies omitted from the index.

Research not indexed in Communication Abstracts is also not accounted for in these data. Communication Abstracts, (1978, p. 3) are based on a review of more than 100 journals which are identified in issue Number 3 of each volume. There may be journals that carry regularly publish research about magazines as a medium of communication that are not abstracted.

This study did not attempt to determine what percentage of total reports published in each journal is magazine research. Neither did the study attempt to determine how the publication of magazine research compares with other medium-specific research. However, that an average of less than 1 report is published per year per journal over the 11-year period of the study suggests that research about magazines does not comprise a substantial portion of the total research published in any one of the journals publishing magazine research. This finding further suggests that magazine research continues to be published relatively infrequently in the journalism and communication journals.

The study also did not attempt to determine the extent to which the infrequent publication of magazine research reflects a similar lack of research being conducted.

ENDNOTES

1. The trade journal, Folio, was excluded from this study because it does not regularly publish the results of scientific inquiry.

2. Data for research published in 1988 (Vol. 12, 1989) were not available when these data were collected; those data have been collected and will be incorporated into these data for publication.

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TABLE 1

Frequency of Citations by Journal, 1977-1987

Journal Title	No. of Citations
Journalism Quarterly	55
Journal of Advertising Research	20
Journal of Advertising	17
Journal of Communication	11
Current Issues and Research in Advertising	6
Journal of the Market Research Society	6
Media Information Australia	4
Gazette	3
Mass Comm Review	3
Sex Roles	3
American Studies	2
Journal of Marketing	2
Journal of Marketing Research	2
Journal of Popular Culture	2
American Journalism	1
Akron Business and Economic Review	1
Archives of Sexual Behavior	1
Business History Review	1
Communication Quarterly	1
Communication Research	1
Critical Studies in Mass Communication	1
European Journal of Marketing	1
Industrial Marketing Management	1
Journal of Applied Communication Research	1
Journal of Drug Education	1
Journal of Drug Issues	1
Journal of Mass Media Ethics	1
Journal of Social Behavior and Personality	1
Journal of Studies on Alcohol	1
Journal of Technical Writing and Communication	1
Journalism History	1
Journalism Monographs	1

(Continued, next page)

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

Frequency of Citations by Journal, 1977-1987

Journal Title	No. of Citations
Media, Culture and Society	1
Psychology and Marketing	1
Psychological Report	1
Public Opinion Quarterly	1
Public Relations Review	1
Social Science Journal	1
Studies in Latin American Popular Culture	1
Teaching Sociology	1
Written Communication	1

Totals: Journal Citations: 163
Book Citations: 14

Total Journals: 41 Total Citations: 177

TABLE 3

Ratio of Journal Citations by Journal Type, 1977-1987

Journal Type	Number of Journals	Number of Citations	% of Journal Citations (N=163)
Journalism/Communication	19	91	55.8%
Advertising/Marketing/Business	11	58	35.6
Popular Culture	2	3	1.8
Related Journals	9	11	6.8
Totals:	41	163	100.0%

TABLE 4a
Frequency of Citations by Journal Type, 1977-1987
Journalism/Communication

Journal Category and Titles	Number of Citations
Journalism Quarterly	55
Journal of Communication	11
Media Information Australia	4
Gazette	3
Mass Comm Review	3
American Studies	2
American Journalism	1
Critical Studies in Mass Communication	1
Journalism History	1
Communication Quarterly	1
Communication Research	1
Journal of Applied Communication Research	1
Journal of Mass Media Ethics	1
Journal of Technical Writing and Communication	1
Journalism Monographs	1
Media, Culture and Society	1
Public Opinion Quarterly	1
Public Relations Review	1
Written Communication	1

Subtotals: Journals: 19 Journal Citations: 91

TABLE 4b

Frequency of Citations by Journal Type, 1977-1987
Non-Journalism/Communication

Journal Category and Titles	Number of Citations
Advertising/Marketing/Business Journals	
Journal of Advertising Research	20
Journal of Advertising	17
Journal of the Market Research Society	6
Current Issues and Research in Advertising	6
Journal of Marketing	2
Journal of Marketing Research	2
Akron Business and Economic Review	1
Business History Review	1
European Journal of Marketing	1
Industrial Marketing Management	1
Psychology and Marketing	1
Subtotals: Journals: 11 Journal Citations:	58
Popular Culture Journals	
Journal of Popular Culture	2
Studies in Latin American Popular Culture	1
Subtotals: Journals: 2 Journal Citations:	3
Related Journals	
Sex Roles	3
Journal of Drug Education	1
Archives of Sexual Behavior	1
Journal of Drug Issues	1
Journal of Studies on Alcohol	1
Journal of Social Behavior and Personality	1
Psychological Report	1
Social Science Journal	1
Teaching Sociology	1
Journals: 9 Journal Citations:	11
Total Jl/MC Journals: 19 Journal Citations:	91
Total Non-Jl/MC Journals: 22 Journal Citations:	72
Totals: 41	163

TABLE 5

Frequency of Citations by Journals Listed in The Iowa Guide, 1977-1987

Journal Title	Number of Citations
Journalism Quarterly	55
Journal of Advertising	17
Journal of Communication	11
Gazette	3
Mass Comm Review	3
Journal of Popular Culture	2
American Studies	2
American Journalism	1
Communication Quarterly	1
Communication Research	1
Critical Studies in Mass Communication	1
Journal of Mass Media Ethics	1
Journalism History	1
Journalism Monographs	1
Media, Culture and Society	1
Public Opinion Quarterly	1
Public Relations Review	1
Social Science Journal	1
Written Communication	1

Journals: 19

Journal Citations: 105

TABLE 6

Frequency of Citations by Journals Not Listed in The Iowa Guide, 1977-1987

Journal Title	Number of Citations
Journal of Advertising Research	20
Current Issues and Research in Advertising	6
Journal of the Market Research Society	6
Media Information Australia	4
Sex Roles	3
Journal of Marketing	2
Journal of Marketing Research	2
Akron Business and Economic Review	1
Archives of Sexual Behavior	1
Business History Review	1
European Journal of Marketing	1
Industrial Marketing Management	1
Journal of Applied Communication Research	1
Journal of Drug Education	1
Journal of Drug Issues	1
Journal of Social Behavior and Personality	1
Journal of Studies on Alcohol	1
Journal of Technical Writing and Communication	1
Psychology and Marketing	1
Psychological Report	1
Studies in Latin American Popular Culture	1
Teaching Sociology	1
Journals: 22	Journal Citations: 58

TABLE 7

Summary of The Iowa Guide Listings

	Total Journals	% of Journals (N=41)	Total Citations	% of Citations (N=163)
Listed	19	46.4	105	64.4
Not Listed	22	53.7	58	35.6
Total	41	100.1*	163	100.0

*Rounding error.

TABLE 8
Total Citations By Year, 1977-1987

Year of Publication	Number of Citations	Cum Freq	Percent of Total	Cum Freq	Percent of Total
		(Chronological) (N=177)		(Inverse) (N=177)	
1977	2	2	1.3%	177	100.0 %
1978 8	6 4.5	175	98.9		
1979	10	18	10.0	169	95.5
1980	11	29	16.4	159	89.8
1981	17	46	25.6	148	83.6
1982	20	66	37.3	131	74.0
1983	26	92	51.9	111	62.7
1984	19	111	62.7	85	48.0
1985	16	127	71.8	66	37.3
1986	34	161	91.1	50	28.3
1987	16	177	100.0	16	9.0
Totals	177	177	100.0	177	100.0

Magazine Division

"Does the Representation of Contemporary Social Issues in Childrens' Magazines Reflect Reality?"

by

Edna Pierce Whiteley
Ohio University

Presented to: the Magazine Division
of the Association for Education
in Journalism and Mass Communication

Minneapolis, Minnesota
August 1990

Today's children are living in an era that is fraught with many problems that had little impact one or two generations ago.

Non-stereotypical roles are being assumed by many. Women are more likely to be found in the work force than at home in today's society. In fact, 70 percent of mothers with school-age children are employed (Long).

Divorce destroys 50 percent of American marriages, thrusts millions of children into single-parent homes, (Long) and frequently dictates that the parent with the responsibility for child care be employed. There is an increasing need to depend upon others to provide this care and an increasing tendency to leave the responsibility with the child. The word "latch key" has evolved to characterize the self-care child. *Editorial Research Reports* determined there were about 7 million latchkey children in 1983 (Strother). The Children's Defense Fund supported that figure with the finding that of the 13 million children age 13 and under whose parents work, almost half are on their own for a part of each working day (Strother).

The contemporary child more frequently than ever before finds himself in a non-traditional family setting. Drugs and alcohol impair many parents. It was reported in 1986 that 28 million children in the United States are in alcoholic homes (Woodside). Biracial and gay parents are more prevalent and visible. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, there were 132,000 black-white marriages in existence in 1981. It has been estimated there are about 6 million children of gay parents (Wolf). Grandparents increasingly are responsible for child raising.

Children are more aware of environmental problems -- the dangers of impure air, food, and water. Children are warned about the risks related to cigarette smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco. Illegal drug use has dramatically increased and permeated even the world of children. Local, state, and national anti-drug campaigns urge our youth to "just say no" and signs posted in front of schools proclaim a "drug-free zone." Increasing numbers of children are being born with Aids and the impact of this disease on children is fast becoming significant.

Other factors complicate the world of today's child. The heightened awareness of physical and sexual abuse has emphasized the need for children to be alert to the advances not only of strangers but also of those they know. Children today are increasingly aware of social problems -- the plight of the homeless, the existence of hunger, and prejudices that have persisted in spite of the conscious efforts of a substantial segment of society to alleviate and eradicate them. There is a struggle between genders to adjust to a slowly-evolving equality. Increased longevity has swelled the numbers of older members in our population and has required younger generations to acknowledge the senior group's presence and importance in society.

A recent trend toward media awareness of modern-day social realities has been noted in the content of children's books and television programming. Educators and counselors have focused on the importance of being able to understand and appreciate our own situation by seeing ourselves in the lives of others. "I'm O.K." is a valid concept and needs to be fostered in children. Children's media can play a major role and television has been at the forefront in the portrayal of special circumstances that helps to validate each child's particular existence. Has the children's magazine industry followed suit? If not, should it and to what degree?

The purpose of this study, preliminary in scope, is to analyze a sample of 1989 children's magazines to determine whether these periodicals include content that reflects today's social realities and suggest an answer to the first question. In addition, the author will consider the ramifications of restructuring the content of children's magazines if, in fact, they are found to be deficient, and suggest methods of rectifying the deficiency if it seems appropriate.

Search of Literature

A comprehensive search of the literature produced a limited yield, an indication that children's magazines have been the subject of few studies. Of those that have been done, there apparently has been no analysis of the treatment of social realities in children's magazines.

In one study, conducted in 1986, the researcher analyzed the content of seven periodicals for preschool children and tested and supported the hypothesis that most periodicals for preschool children are inapproriate for that audience (Scofield). In 1987, the depiction of older characters in 11 children's magazines chosen at random was the focus of a dissertation that determined the elderly were not accurately represented in text or illustrations in the selected magazines (Almerico).

The wildlife magazine, *Ranger Rick*, was scrutinized in 1985 and the audience surveyed to identify this publication's influence on children's perceptions of natural resource issues (Pomerantz). In

1980, male and female sex roles were studied in a content analysis of four nationally-circulated children's magazines and were found to be stereotypical. Specifically, men were seen more often as leading characters and were cast in a greater variety of occupations than were women. Men and boys were depicted more often than women and girls, and in fiction, females were shown to be subordinate to males (Whitney).

A 1986 content study of two Israeli children's magazines focused on child characters and their social roles. This study showed that one publication cast children in roles that made them frequent participants in the adult world while the other placed juveniles in a setting that was more consistent with real life (Eyal).

Several other articles, although not studies of children's publications, were pertinent to the purpose of this paper.

Thomas J. Buttery, chairman of early childhood and elementary education at the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa, published an article titled "Helping Biracial Children Adjust," in *Kappa Delta Pi Record* (Buttery). Although it reflected on first-generation children of black-white mixture in particular, parallels to other racial combinations can be drawn. The article was meant to help teachers understand the problems of biracial children and devise a plan to facilitate their adjustment in the classroom.

According to Buttery, biracial children are exposed to the demonstrated prejudices of many people who view the interracial mix of the home as atypical, even comtemptible.

The close relatives of the interracial couple may be equally unaccepting, creating friction and an in-limbo existence for the family.

The children of such a union, whatever their skin tone, are perceived to be black and the family, although it is best suited to an integrated community, often lives elsewhere.

There may be constant awareness of the struggle of one or more members to adapt if a fit cannot be found that is comfortable for all. There is a great tendency for the interracial family to be marked by internal and external identity problems.

This is just a sample of the potential difficulties biracial children may encounter.

Buttery noted that the interracial family that is evident in today's society is practically invisible in literature, curricula, and the media. Buttery's advice to classroom teachers included the recommendation that they provide biracial children with these few books and other materials that portray interracial families, so that through them biracial children can identify themselves in society.

Virginia L. Wolf, professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, recently investigated children's literature to see if there were any books that portrayed gay families. She found only eleven, two of which devoted only a portion of the book to the topic. Wolf believes that although gay families are not well-accepted in society, it is unfair to bar the children of these families from reading stories that will help them validate their family lives.

Wolf found that only five of the books actually identified the parents as gay while the other six portrayed a living arrangement in which a parent might be gay. Initially disappointed with the latter, she later concluded that the non-specific approach was more "refreshing" than the issue-driven scheme. Wolf said that whenever the issue drives the content, homosexuality is perceived as a problem while the use of a subtle approach creates a more natural appearance.

Wolf stated that all minority children need to read books that give them positive, realistic, or at least neutral self-images. "They need to know that being different does not make them bad or worthless, but rather special in their own way."

It is Wolf's opinion that all children should have access to books about gay families because that is one way they can view gay family experiences and grow in understanding.

An article titled, "Children of Alcoholics: Breaking the Cycle," appeared in the December 1986 *Journal of School Health* (Woodside). Migs Woodside, president of the Children of Alcoholics Foundation, Inc., discussed the problems that children of alcoholics may have as children and later as adults. Of particular interest was Woodside's observation that the children of alcoholics need to bring the problem out of hiding and talk about it. They need to know there are others like them. According to Woodside, "Many children of alcoholics are tremendously relieved when they are able to talk about the family secret and have the support of a concerned adult to help them validate their feelings and experiences."

"A School Program for Children of Alcoholics" was discussed by authors Kay W. Lehr, school nurse and Children of Alcoholics program coordinator, and Margaret M. Schrock, school nurse. Students in the program were given the opportunity to provide an anonymous appraisal of the effects of the program on them and many said that it was helpful to see the others in the program and know that parental alcoholism was a shared problem.

Jane Yolen is a teacher, lecturer on writing children's books, and the author of *Writing Books for Children*. "It's Not All Peter

Rabbit" announced Yolen in an article that appeared in the April 1975 issue of *The Writer.*

Yolen said there are children's books that reflect realism of virtually all subjects. The list includes the deadly sins, sex, death, drugs, drunkenness, divorce, poverty, and hunger. Representative titles and topics enumerated by Yolen are: "*Sounder* (William H. Armstrong) looks at white man's brutality to blacks; *My Darling, My Hamburger* (Paul Zindel) at premarital sex, pregnancy, and abortion; *I'll Get There: It Better Be Worth the Trip* (John Donovan) at homosexuality; *The Pigman* (Paul Zindel) at senility."

Yolen said that young readers should be reached through "sensitive exploration" of these problems, many of which they personally experience. Proper handling leads to understanding and, it is hoped, solutions for those who need them.

The book, *Children and Television, Lessons from Sesame Street,* was consulted to determine the Children's Television Workshop's original and ultimately overriding philosophy for depiction of the child's world. The choice was either realism or idealism -- to depict the child's world as it is or as the Workshop thought it should be. Some reasoned that the use of kindness and decency in social relationships was desirable and should be encouraged through character interaction that demonstrated those qualities. But others argued that the child would not always encounter kindness and decency in real-life experiences and those contradictions should be depicted as well so children could learn to cope with harsh reality. The Workshop decided to represent both realism and idealism in *Sesame Street* content.

Letters from Editors of Children's Magazines

This researcher wrote to the editors of seven widely-circulated children's periodicals and explained the design, focus, and purpose of this study. Guidance was requested for determining audience needs and interests. There were five replies.

Catherine Ripley, a senior editor of *Chickadee*, said her staff is in "constant touch" with children, but policy dictates confidentiality of facts and figures. Ripley said it is believed *Chickadee* meets the needs and desires of the 4-8-year-old age group perfectly through a balanced content that provides varied reading levels in stories and articles that inspire children to "laugh, think and wonder." According to Ripley, *Chickadee* is strongly reader-directed.

Children's Digest editor Elizabeth A. Rinck briefly stated that her editorial staff "makes every effort to keep abreast of reader's interests and needs" but the publication does not have a separate department for this purpose.

Deborah Vetter, the associate editor of *Cricket*, replied that her publication does not have a department that concerns itself with the changing needs and interests of children. She said this information is gained through associations with authors, illustrators and publishers in the field of children's literature in addition to staff parental experiences. *Cricket* seeks reader responses and suggestions for content decisions. Vetter listed several genres of literature that are perennial favorites as well as specific topics such as outer space, horses, and unicorns that have constant appeal.

Wee Wisdom's associate editor Susan Thompson said the study of children's needs and interests is not couched in a specific department but the information is acquired from the many publications for and about children that are subscribed to by the Kansas City Library. *Growing Child Research Review* is prominent among these publications and a sample copy accompanied Thompson's reply. The *Review* is a newsletter-style eclectic monthly that "provides up-to-date news, research findings, and specialists' viewpoints on topics relating to child development in the fields of education, mental health, psychology, sociology, and medicine, among others, without partiality for any particular theory."

Christine A. Swanson, associate editor of *Highlights for Children,* monitors children's interests and needs. Information is gained in a variety of ways, including attending reading conferences, belonging to professional organizations concerned with children's well-being, making classroom visits to obtain student input about *Highlights* and similar publications, and availing themselves of the expertise of speakers in the areas of "child development, child abuse, and other pertinent matters of interest and concern."

Follow-up letters were sent to the editors of *Chickadee, Children's Digest,* and *Cricket,* inviting them to be more direct in their replies. A response was received from an editor from *Chickadee* who said the *Chickadee* staff recognizes and tries to include the world's "diversity, complexity, and richness." *Chickadee* studio photography is done with children from diverse cultural backgrounds and also includes disabled children. The fiction content of *Chickadee* reflects a "variety of social situations."

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are:

1. Divorce is not represented in stories.

2. Latchkey children rarely appear in stories.
3. Impaired parents are not depicted in stories.
4. Family constellations show monoracial heterosexual parents.
5. Environmental concerns are not considered in stories.
6. Personal health issues are not presented in stories.
7. Racial balance depicted in stories and illustrations reflects reality.
8. Homelessness is not considered in stories.
9. Messages that can be applied to children's everyday lives are frequently present but are more often traditional than contemporary.
10. The gender of the dominant characters is more often male than female.
11. Females and/or African-Americans are seen in non-stereotypical roles.
12. Working mothers rarely appear in stories.
13. Physical and/or sexual abuse is not shown in stories.
14. Hunger is not presented as a problem.
15. The elderly are not represented accurately.

Methodology

The method of study was a content analysis of four children's magazines: *Cricket, Highlights for Children, Children's Playmate, and Children's Digest,* designated in the study by the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively. These publications were chosen because they are widely circulated and readily available. *Cricket* is published monthly. *Highlights*, published eleven times a year, has a combined July-August issue. Both *Children's Playmate* and *Children's Digest* are published eight times a year. The months of April and May are combined as are June and July. The first magazine of each quarter (January, April, July and October) was studied with the following exceptions: the June issue of *Highlights* was substituted for the combined July-August issue and the January, April-May, June-July and October issues of *Children's Playmate* and *Children's Digest* were studied.

These publications are designed for different age groups with some overlap. Each is intended for the age group of focus in this study, boys and girls in elementary school. *Children's Playmate* is for 5-7-year-olds, *Children's Digest* is for 8-10-year-olds, *Cricket* is for 6-12-year-olds, and *Highlights* is for 2-12-year-olds.

The unit of analysis was the story, chosen because stories in children's publications are relatively short and insufficient information is contained in briefer units.

A total of 17 characteristics was devised by the researcher to identify pertinent elements of the stories, illustrations, and covers and was coded. A coding sheet appears at the end of the paper as an appendix.

1. fact or fiction
2. title: descriptive or non-descriptive
3. gender: geared to boys, girls, or both.
4. category of the cover
5. gender of the dominant character
6. female character in a stereotypical role
7. race of the dominant character
8. African-American character in a stereotypical role
9. depiction of the elderly

10. story category
11. description of the illustrations
12. story message
13. race depicted when writer or illustrator had freedom of choice
14. racial content of the cover
15. adult supervision
16. head of the household
17. message is traditional or reflects contemporary social issues

The content was scanned initially to determine appropriate categories. Categories were added as needed. A story that seemed to fit two categories was placed in the predominant category. After all the content was analyzed, the empty categories were dropped from the analysis. A partial listing of categories used includes: pets, science, hobby, community life, safety, people from foreign lands, fantasy, famous people, mystery, family living, conservation, and ecology.

The compiled data were fed into the Statistical Program for Social Sciences. Frequencies and crosstabs were obtained.

Of the 148 stories that were analyzed, 56 were from *Cricket,* 41 from *Highlights*, 27 from *Children's Digest* and 24 from *Children's Playmate*. It was not expected that *Children's Digest* and *Children's Playmate* would contain as many stories as *Cricket* and *Highlights* because the former are smaller publications. *Cricket* averages three-to-four more stories per issue than *Highlights* but *Highlights* devotes more pages to novelty than does *Cricket*. *Highlights* contains an average of 10 novelty pages while *Cricket* averages two pages of novelty items.

Results

Overall, seven stories (4.7%) had an obvious connection with the social realities chronicled in the introduction. The breakdown by magazine was *Cricket*, 2; *Highlights*, 3; *Children's Playmate*, 2; and *Children's Digest*, 0.

Because there are so few social realities-based stories and because the method of presentation is germane to a consideration of whether this type of story should or should not appear in children's magazines, a synopsis of these stories seems warranted.

The first *Cricket* story was about a pair of rough, faded longjohns and a bright, beautiful, fancy nightgown that were hanging side by side on a clothesline. Neither spoke because both were aware of their dissimilarities. A sudden snowstorm frightened the nightgown and the longjohns came to her rescue. This selfless act made the nightgown realize that personal qualities are more important than physical characteristics. And the nightgown's changed attitude made the longjohns feel better about himself. The second story was about a tiger who had lost his stripes. His altered appearance affected his self-identity and the way he was regarded by other animals.

The first *Highlights* story was about two latchkey children who were instantly transported to a strange land when one pushed the "escape" key on their computer. They feared their mother would come home from work, turn off the computer, and eliminate their chance to return. The second piece duplicated a portion of Martin Luther King Jr's message that all inhabitants of the globe are neighbors. The third story told about a prairie community that collected potatoes for a reclusive member when it found he had no food.

The first story in *Children's Playmate* showed a group of pet shop cats of long residence that decided to diguise themselves as other animals to see if that would speed up sales. The cats talked about secrets and identified the ones that could be kept or should be revealed. An overt discussion of sexual abuse followed. The second story focused on a home where both parents worked at alternating times. The couple's son liked this arrangement because each parent provided special times when he or she was in charge. When the arrangement changed so that both parents worked and were at home simultaneously, the boy gradually saw that going to the baby sitter's was not so bad and having the whole family together more was especially nice.

There were two stories that had a subtle relationship to current social realities and are recapped here. A *Highlights* story told about an imaginative child who was always changing identities, including his name. When he got lost at a store he knew he had to use his real name so his mother could find him. An adult could base a discussion of strangers on this story. The second story was about a little girl who accepted her father's responsibilities when he was temporarily incapacitated by illness. A parallel could be drawn to parental drug and alcohol impairment.

The stories with obvious themes focused on prejudice, latch key arrangements, hunger, sexual abuse, and working mothers, while the subtle stories could be used by an adult for discussions with children about sexual or physical abuse and parental drug or alcohol impairment. The other specific social realities looked for -- divorce, gay or biracial parents, environmental concerns, personal health issues, and the homeless problem -- were not found in any of the stories in the analysis

An analysis of the total content of the study did yield information about the remaining hypotheses including stereotypical role presentation, family constellations, racial representation, message type, appearance of the elderly, and gender dominance.

The roles played by African-Americans and women in the stories showed that African-Americans, as expected, were never cast in stereotypical roles but that women's roles (the home-based mother) were stereotypical in 31 percent of the 45 stories where mothers appeared, a figure that accurately represents the 70 percent of women in the work force.

The family settings were studied to identify the adult(s) in charge. (Table 1) Of the 44 stories that showed family settings, grandparents were obviously in charge in one and both parents were obviously present in 29, (67 percent). The remaining 14 stories, (33 percent) gave the appearance of having one parent in charge because a second parent was not mentioned. A subtle depiction of divorce and the one-parent home could be construed. The figure compares to the 1988 U.S. Bureau of the Census finding that single-parent homes for all races is about 27 percent. However, when considering the number of one-parent African-American homes is almost 60 percent, the figure is not realistic for many children.

The story that had grandparents at the head of the family was in *Highlights*. *Cricket* contained 10 two-parent stories or 35 percent of the total. *Highlights* and *Children's Digest* each contained six two-parent stories which accounted for 21 percent of the total. *Children's Playmate* contained seven two-parent stories, 24 percent of the total. *Cricket* and *Children's Playmate* contained two one-parent settings or 14 percent of the total while *Children's Digest* contained three one-parent settings or 21 percent of all. *Highlights* contained seven one-parent settings or 50 percent of all.

Table 1

One and Two-Parent Settings

Magazine	One Parent	Two Parents
Children's Digest	3 (21)	6 (21)
Children's Playmate	2 (14)	7 (24)
Cricket	2 (14)	10 (35)
Highlights	7 (50)	6 (21)
Total	14 (33)	29 (67)

( ) in percent

Adult supervision of children in all settings in a total of 51 stories was noted. (Table 2) Forty-four stories (86 percent) showed children in settings with adult supervision and seven stories (14 percent) showed children in settings without adult supervision. The latter were not labeled latchkey situations but gave that appearance. The high percentage of parent-monitored settings portrays the ideal but prpbably does not reflect the actual incidence of latchkey arrangements in society. *Cricket, Children's Playmate,* and *Children's Digest* had 10 stories each that included an adult, about 23 percent of the total for each. *Highlights* had 14 stories that showed an adult in charge, about 32 percent of the total. Of the seven stories that showed children in settings with no adult supervision, *Cricket* carried five of these, *Highlights* and *Children's Digest* had one each, and *Children's Playmate* showed no setting where children were without adult supervision.

Table 2

Adult Supervision

Magazine	Supervision	No Supervision
Children's Digest	10 (23)	1 (14)
Children's Playmate	10 (23)	0
Cricket	10 (23)	5 (71)
Highlights	14 (32)	1 (14)
Total	44 (86)	7 (14)

( ) in percent

The magazines were studied to determine the amount of racial representation in covers, illustrations, and text and comparisons made with reality. Table 3 shows racial representation in covers It must be emphasized that since there were only 16 covers, the significance of the findings is extremely limited, particularly since seven of the covers did not depict people

Highlights covers always depicted a multiracial mix of people in a shared experience, *Cricket* depicted people in three of its four covers, one involving a multiracial mix in a shared experience and the other two with one Caucasian each. *Children's Playmate* depicted people in one of its four covers. That cover showed Caucasians only in a shared experience. *Children's Digest* depicted people in two of its four covers. One cover showed Caucasians in a shared experience and the other showed one Caucasian.

Table 3

Racial Content of Sixteen Covers

Magazine	People	Caucasians	Solo	Shared	Multi-racial	Solo	Shared
Children's Digest	2	2	1	1	0		
Children's Playmate	1	1	0	1	0		
Cricket	3	2	2	0	1	0	1
Highlights	4	0			4	0	4
Total	10	5	3	2	5	0	5

Table 4 shows racial representation in stories. Sixty-five of the total 148 stories showed Caucasians in dominant roles, 19 stories showed non-Caucasians in dominant roles, 59 stories were about others topics, and in five stories the race of the dominant character could not be determined.

Cricket carried 21 stories in which Caucasians were cast in dominant roles and 11 stories in which non-Caucasians played the dominant roles. *Highlights* carried 23 stories in which Caucasians played the dominant roles and three stories that were dominated by non-Caucasians. *Children's Playmate* carried 11 stories depicting Caucasians in the dominant roles ane one story with non-Caucasians in the dominant role. *Children's Digest* carried 10 stories with

Caucasians in the dominant roles and four stories in which the dominant role was played by non-Caucasians.

Of the 84 stories in which race dominance was evident, 77 percent were dominated by Caucasians and 23 percent were dominated by non-Caucasians. The minority representation was higher than in the population at large, 15 percent according to the 1987 Census.

Table 4

Racial Dominance in Stories

Magazine	Caucasians	Non-Caucasians
Children's Digest	10	4
Children's Playmate	11	1
Cricket	21	11
Highlights	23	3
Story Proportion	77 %	23%

The stories were studied to see what race the characters were when it appeared that any race could have been chosen by the author and/or illustrator. (Table 5) Eliminating the 87 stories that did not qualify for consideration in this area, 46 of the remaining 61 were about Caucasians, 11 stories were about non-Caucasians and in four stories the racial content could not be determined. By percentage, 81 percent were about Caucasians and 19 percent were about another race. This minority representation was greater than the population at large.

The breakdown by magazine shows *Cricket* carried 15 stories about Caucasians and three stories about non-Caucasians, *Highlights* carried 12 stories about Caucasians and five stories about non-Caucasians, *Children's Playmate* had 11 stories about Caucasians and two stories about non-Caucasians, and *Children's Digest* had eight stories about Caucasians and one story about non-Caucasians.

Table 5

Racial Depiction by Choice

Magazine	Caucasians	Non-Caucasians
Children's Digest	8	1
Children's Playmate	11	1
Cricket	15	3
Highlights	12	5
Story Proportion	81%	19%

The stories were studied to determine if they provided messages that the audience members could apply in their everyday lives. (Table 6) Sixty-four of the total stories contained messages or 43 percent. Of the 64, *Cricket* carried 16; *Highlights*, 23; *Children's Playmate*, 12; and *Children's Digest*, 13.

The messages were qualified to judge whether they were traditional or oriented to contemporary times. Of the 64 messages, ten or 16 percent were timely. *Highlights* contained four timely messages, *Cricket* contained two, *Children's Playmate* contained two and *Children's Digest* contained no timely messages.

Table 6

Messages

Magazine	Story Number	Traditional	Timely
Children's Digest	13	12 (92)	1 (8)
Children's Playmate	12	10 (83)	2 (17)
Cricket	16	13 (81)	3 (19)
Highlights	23	19 (83)	4 (17)
Total	64	54 (84)	10 (16)

( ) in percent

The depiction of the elderly was limited to grandparents who appeared in the text of five of the 148 stories and were illustrated in four. The depictions were accurate. The text in every instance accorded the grandparent characters respect, consideration, and affection.

Gender dominance was monitored in this study. In the case of fantasy stories, pronouns determined gender. Out of 101 stories that qualified for consideration, 25 percent were dominated by females, 52 percent by males, and 24 percent 699.***by both. These results echo Whitney's 1980 study.

Conclusions

The primary contention that children's magazines address few social realities that confront many contemporary children has been supported by this preliminary study. The children's magazines studied have followed only to a slight degree the trend set by those who determine the content of children's books and television programs. The study findings warrant analysis of a broader spectrum of children's magazines to determine comparable or confounding results. Comparable results would suggest, at the least, objective discussion among children's magazine editors.

The literature review provided considerable support for the concept that being able to identify with others in the same situation is a positive force. The children's magazine industry may fear that the inclusion of controversial subjects will affect circulation. There is a greater chance of offending a portion of the magazine audience than book readers or television viewers because the content of the latter is focused, predictable, and labeled. There is an inherent danger in presenting the unexpected in any medium.

In addition, editors of children's magazines may feel that their publications, by avoiding contemporary social realities, can offer a haven where controversy does not intrude and provide a picture of a world that is worthy of mimicry.

It is also possible that additional research that examines children's magazine issues from previous years, might reveal that the low percentage of social reality stories seen in 1989 actually represents an increase over previous years and an early trend.

However, the fact remains that there are complex social realities today and children are aware of them, many intimately. Stories in children's magazines that reflect these issues would add another dimension to the frontier that acknowledges the existence of social realities and airs them.

The results of the study were seen to support hypotheses 1-10, prove hypothesis 11 as it relates to African-Americans but not in relation to women, and disprove hypotheses 12-15.

Recommendations

It is recommended that children's magazine editors consider devoting more space than they presently do to content that reflects the contemporary social realities that children are aware of or directly experience. The stories reviewed in this study that did focus on some of these realities were sensitive, appealing, and undoubtedly beneficial.

Magazine editors may recoil from treating some of the more controversial realities and it's possible, at least initially, these should be avoided. Perhaps always.

It is recommended that magazine editors start by focusing on what is needed by all children whose family settings are special and that is depiction. The latchkey child, the child from a one-parent home, the child of an interracial marriage, the child with gay parents, the child with an impaired parent -- all children whose homes contain a special ingredient, need to know they are not alone, that there are other family settings that duplicate theirs. If these children can see themselves depicted directly or even subtly in the magazines designed especially for them, they can validate their conditions and be warmed or bolstered by the simple realization that others bear their likeness.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
I D					Story #			F/f	title	Gender	cover cat.		DC	F S	R#1	BS	Category			Art		L	Race Pics	RC cover	S	Head home	CL	DE

1-5	mag. identification
6-8	Story number
9	Fact or fiction
10	title descriptive or non descriptive
11	Gender
12-13	cover category
14	Dominant character
15	Female in stereotypical role
16	race of the dominant character
17	African American in stereotypical role
18-20	Category
21-22	Art
23	Story lesson or message
24	race pictured
25	racial content of cover
26	Supervision
27	Head of the home
28	contemporary message
29	depiction of elderly

Coding sheet chn's magazine study

Magazine Division

"Does the Representation of Contemporary Social Issues in Children's Magazines Reflect Reality?"
Edna Pierce Whiteley

Corrections:

Title Page: **Children's**

Hypotheses, page 10:

4. Family constellations **always** show monoracial heterosexual parents.
11. Females and/or African Americans are seen **only** in non-stereotypical roles.
13. Physical and/or sexual abuse is (are) not **discussed** in stories.

Page 21, paragraph 2 -- **delete 699.****

The researcher regrets these errors.

INDEPENDENT FILM FORTUNES IN THE 1980s: "THE SPRING OF HOPE, THE WINTER OF DESPAIR"

by

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Presented to the Management and Economics Division at the 1990 annual convention of the AEJMC, Minneapolis, Minn.

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Introduction

Charles Dickens' description of French society during revolutionary days as "the best of times and the worst of times" seems equally applicable to the fortunes of independent filmmakers during the 1980s. The world of the mid 1980s was quite different from today in the motion picture industry. Independent film distributors had reached their zenith in 1985. The rapid growth of videocassette recorders and video stores, the sharp rise in the number of cable MSOs and subscribers, the theater construction boom and the growth of the foreign market, spurred by foreign homevideo and a declining dollar led to a surge in independent film production and a marked decrease in market shares for the major motion picture studios. Encouraged by a few high-grossing films and Oscars for such quality films as Platoon, A Trip to Bountiful and Kiss of the Spider Woman, many independents increased their production starts as well as their budgets for those films. These producers, of mainly art films, continued their assault on market shares for two more successful years but then many crashed almost as quickly as they had risen. By 1989, the bloom had faded; the major studios had regained their dominance, accounting for ninety-five percent of the total U.S. box office receipts.[1]

Overspending on films, inflated visions of how many pictures could be produced, too little cash for production, a large number of flops (some of which went straight to videocassette release) and, perhaps most lethal of all, a glut of films in the late 1980s delivered the telling blow that floored many independents and forced the reorganization of such prominent companies as DeLaurentis and Cannon. Many other distributors such as Empire, Kings Road, FilmDallas, Lorimar, Palisades and RAI/Sacis either have gone out of business or have failed to issue product in the last two years.

The start of the 1990s has witnessed a revamping in production, distribution and financing by the independents. First, fewer films with higher quality are planned. Second, many independents are no longer distributing their own products, relying on majors for the 'pickup.' Third, production money is beginning to be influenced by overseas investors, primarily the Japanese. Finally, the growth of the overseas market has proven to be an effective carrot for attracting new investors.[2]

An understanding of the rapid rise of independent producers in the 1980s and their continuing influence on the structural changes within the industry are essential for film industry researchers because unlike the ancillary windows (video, pay-per-view and cable as well as foreign markets), the independents represent a challenge to the major studios from **within** the industry itself. For the first time since the Paramount decree, the majors have been forced to face competition that has created changes not only in the level of concentration within the industry but also within its financial structure. Although the major studios still hold a majority of the rental shares through their ability to out-spend and out-distribute independent producers, the entrance and continued existence of independent producers as a force in the market has been firmly established.

This paper attempts to explain both the internal changes and the rise and decline of independent film distributors during the 1980s. Specifically, such factors as barriers to entry, changes in the ancillary markets and the financial decisions made by independents will be examined. Furthermore, a case study of five different metropolitan markets -- Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Kansas City and Seattle was undertaken to examine local distribution and exhibition patterns. In particular, the case study will examine the general claim from independents that they still face difficulties in obtaining screens for their pictures.

Review of the Literature

Research on the rise and role of independent motion picture distributors can be regarded as scant at best. The newness of their large-scale flowering and the lack of hard economic data, both real-world and scholarly, make an accurate assessment of the role of the independent distributor in the 1980s quite difficult.

Dominick's analysis of the effects of economics on film content found that independently released films have a greater diversity of content than do films released by the major studios.[3] The results of his research confirmed his hypothesis that the oligopolistic structure of the major studios leads to excessive sameness in film production. The existence of demand uncertainty usually means that the studios will continue to use "tried and true" formulas that have known audience appeal.[4] Yet such formulas tend to be expensive. Independent distributors, therefore, tend to be more innovative because innovation is less expensive.

Litman and Kohl's article on decision-making in the motion picture industry provides the most recent source of statistical analysis to explain how three critical areas: the creative sphere, scheduling and release factors and the advertising and marketing effort can effect the financial success of films released by both majors and independents.[5] The creative sphere refers to all the factors involved in making a film such as well-known theme ideas, the use of well-known actors and directors and the amount of the production budget.[6] The study found that the relative importance of lavish production budgets diminished slightly in the 1980s while top stars and directors still retained their lustre.[7] For independents, whose films tend to be lower budget and feature lesser-known actors than those of the majors, the finding suggests that financial barriers to entry as a whole may be slightly lower than in the past, allowing quality productions to gain a toehold.

The second critical area, the scheduling and release pattern, also has decreased as a barrier to entry. Independents once had to release films through the majors. But, Litman and Kohl found that the largest of the independent distributors, including Cannon and the now-defunct DeLaurentis, have been able to provide quality equalling the majors on a smaller distribution scale.[8] For example, Litman and Kohl found that national saturation releases (1,000 screens or more) are now the key money-making release factor. (Access to first-run theaters rather than screens used to be the primary factor.) Furthermore, the larger independents during the 1980s demonstrated that they are capable of such saturation releases.[9]

Release patterns also are essential to a film's financial success. Litman and Kohl found summer to be the most crucial release period.[10] While Christmas and Easter, the two other holiday periods are still peak periods for audience attendance, competition at the Christmas season is so intense that Christmas releases no longer guarantee financial success.[11] Releases from the major studios still dominate the peak holiday periods, however, as independents tend to time their releases to dodge the majors' products.[12]

The final critical factor for boxoffice success is the advertising/marketing effort expended by the distributor. Because it often costs nearly as much to advertise a film as to make one, the major distributors with their substantial cash flow usually can launch the biggest advertising campaigns for their films.[13] By contrast, independents rarely attempt national marketing campaigns. Instead, they target individual markets sequentially.

Overall, Litman and Kohl found that while release by a major distributor does not guarantee financial success, the majors are still more likely to obtain the right combination of financing, theaters, marketing and optimal sequencing than are the independents.[14] Finally, and important for this study, Litman and Kohl state that theatrical release is still the predominant factor that sets the tone and determines the financial returns for ancillary markets.[15] In short, the independents rely on videocassettes, cable, pay-per-view and foreign sales to generate a substantial amount of their revenues, although a picture's boxoffice success mediates the overall amount of revenue these ancillaries will provide.

The lack of scholarly research pertaining to independent filmmakers means that the most useful sources for information about the current structure and financing of independent distributors come from the trade press, mainly Variety, and such popular publications as Business Week, Fortune, Forbes and Time magazines. The statistical data should be viewed with some reserve as the nature of the industry is such that proprietary data is the norm. For instance, the market shares for the independents cited in this paper had to be estimated based on an aggregation of individual film revenues because the independents' market shares are not published.

Because the ancillary markets have been a central factor in the rise of the independents, their role will be examined briefly before the independents' structural and economic status is digested.

The Videocassette Factor

The growth of home video parallels the rise of independent motion picture distributors and is central to the rise of independent producers. The majors, and especially the independents, have capitalized on the popularity of VCRs which found their way into homes on a wide scale beginning in 1982-83. In 1980, theater rentals accounted for 76 percent of all film revenues while videocassettes accounted for only one percent. Yet seven years later, theater rentals had dropped to 42 percent of all film revenue while cassettes had zoomed to 39 percent.[16] By 1989 videocassettes fell to only 29 percent of all film revenues.[17] The resurgence of theater attendance and the growth of the foreign market were the main factors in this decrease.

The growth of home videocassettes in the 1980s led to increasing consumer demand for product, a void which both the majors and the independents sought to fill. Distribution agreements with then-newly established independent home video companies also spurred the increase of independently produced films. These independent video operations, which compete with the majors' video distribution units, needed product to distribute and since the independent producers for the most part lacked distribution arms, they proved the most logical choice.[18]

Film distributors initially viewed videocassette sales as the proverbial life raft when movies stalled at the boxoffice. If a motion picture's release resulted in less than sterling box office receipts, distributors knew that at least some of the film's negative costs and promotion/marketing expenditures could be offset by cassette sales.[19]

Independents tend to rely on video sales even more so than do the majors and mini-majors. During the independents' production peak, much of the money needed to produce their films was obtained by preselling the videocassette and foreign rights. This method of financing eliminated much of the fund-raising difficulties independents once faced. Menahem Golan, former co-owner of the Cannon Group, said the videocassette and pay cable rights were presold for almost every film his company produced during the 1980s.[20] These presales helped the independents to have up front production money, conserve their capital and reduce some of the financial risk that all films face.

This new means of financing plus the success of some films led many independents to think there was a bigger market for their movies than really existed. Some independents increased their production costs and sought out name stars for their pictures believing that both large theatrical and ancillary markets awaited their product.[21] By the end of the decade, however, many independents became financially strapped as revenues from presales decreased. The film industry's production boom at the end of the decade led to a glut of product allowing video companies to be more selective in their purchase agreements. As Table 1 shows, from 1986 through 1988, well over 500 American-made films flooded the theatrical or video markets each year. Video companies no longer had to settle for 'B' pictures for distribution. Similarly, the motion picture glut meant consumers didn't have to settle for 'B' pictures either.

Today, the biggest theatrical hits are receiving disproportionate attention in video markets.

The videocassette market also initially eased the exhibition woes of many independents since many low-budget filmmakers could bypass the theatrical exhibition sector and make their product directly for videocassette sales. Yet, this exhibition pattern for video also has its downside for independents. As the made-for-video phenomenon for independents rose from fewer than 40 films per year in 1985 to over 100 titles per year (i.e., 21% of all independent films produced in the U.S.) when the film glut began,[22] total revenues decreased for the independents since direct-to-video releases did not also obtain boxoffice revenues.

Cable Television

Although not as important a source of income for motion pictures as videocassettes,[23] cable television has provided a steady source of income for independent film producers, and perhaps more importantly, has offered these producers another avenue for exhibition of their product.

A slowdown in the number of cable subscribers in 1985 after five years of growth is one reason why cable generates less revenue for motion picture producers than does the video market.[24] In fact, the early release date for movies on videocassette is a contributing factor to the drop in multi-pay cable subscribers. A second factor is that cable products are bundled goods whereas videocassettes are unbundled. This difference allows videocasette distributors to capture more consumer surplus. The cable industry is still continuing its growth, albeit on a slower scale than in previous years. In 1990, 52,564,470 subscribers received at least basic cable service from some 7,731 cable systems.[25] By comparison, in 1980, there were only 16,000,000 subscribers and 4,225 systems.[26]

Even though the industry experienced less growth in the latter part of the 1980s, the reality that cable is a firmly entrenched medium suggests that motion picture distributors and especially independents will have a continuing ancillary source for income.

The Impact of the Theater Construction Boom

Although videocassettes appear to be the prime factor in the rise of the independents, the rapid growth of the traditional exhibition venue, the movie theater, cannot be discounted as a factor in the rise of the independents. Despite the fact that ticket sales in the mid-1980s were three times lower than they were forty years earlier, the '80s witnessed a theater construction boom.[27] According to Guback, the theater boom is tied to the growth of shopping malls, the relatively inexpensive cost of construction, leasing arrangements, the sale of refreshments and careful investment of short-term cash reserves.[28]

While the number of screens in 1988 was approximately 23,234,[29], the rise of the multiplex theater complex has meant that seating capacity per screen is smaller than in past decades. In 1948 during the height of theater attendance, average seating capacity was 661. By the 1980s, auditoria held approximately 342 persons.[30]

Although this implies a decrease in revenue per picture, the rise in the number of screens provides an enhanced opportunity for the independent producer. Multiplex owners must seek more product to fill their screens as the number of films produced by the majors is insufficient. Although occasional deals are struck with distributors to allow a blockbuster to simultaneously play on two screens in one theater, this is not the norm.

The independents have filled this gap only to a minor extent. As Figure 1 shows, during peak release periods like summer, only two of the top five grossing independent films of summer 1989 obtained saturation releases. Furthermore, after only three weeks the top independent films began a swift decay in the number of screens to which they played. During the same time period, the top five major films all received saturation releases and demonstrated stable release patterns for an average of six weeks. Although it is difficult to determine if theater owners give preference to films by the majors because they are considered a more certain product than are independent films, the dominance of the majors during peak release periods is unmistakable. As Table 2 shows, the top ten grossing films of summer 1989, all produced by the major studios, averaged 14,686 of the 23,234 screens--63 percent--in the United States. The ways in which independents attempt to get their films screened and how they compete with the majors for access to screens will be discussed shortly.

Independents in the 1980s

Although the rise of the ancillary markets provided the funding and viewing boost that propelled the independents to prominence during the past decade, the ancillary markets only partially explain the independents' rise. An understanding of the independents' organizational structure also is necessary.

Independent films and independent film distributors have existed since the infancy of the motion picture industry; however, prior to the rise of the ancillary markets, these independents had a much harder task to finance and distribute their products. While cash-flow is still a major stumbling block for most independents, these firms have turned the shoe-string budgets of yesterday into a seemingly new economic system. Unlike the majors which are known for bloated budgets, excessive overhead and expensive union labor, the independents have developed an internal structure that is a streamlined version of the majors' operations with more responsible financing.

Executives often double as directors, production staffs are scaled down, offices are located outside of Hollywood, filming is done on location, expenditures for marketing and promotion are more tightly controlled and non-union workers are used--key factors to their tight-fisted management system.[31]

The independents' organizational structure and financial planning allowed the firms a toehold in market shares during the

1980s. As Table 3 shows, the motion picture distributors' level of concentration actually decreased slowly throughout most of the 1980s. A return to increased concentration was noted at the end of the decade when many independent producers began experiencing financial difficulties or were absorbed by major companies. Although the decrease has shown no major jumps, it is a steady decline. The CR4, CR6, and CR8 ratios reveal that the majors, while still dominant, did lose market shares.

When viewed as an aggregate, the independents appeared to be a blossoming threat to the industry's overall concentration level during the mid-1980s. However, when examined company by company, only a few of the independents, most noticeably, Atlantic, Cannon, New World and New Line, have been able to sustain more than a one percent market share. Yet, even these independent market share leaders are not truly a credible threat to any of the individual studios. The majors' financial power, their use of established distribution networks and their investments into the ancillary markets have kept much of the industry still concentrated within their grasp.

Perhaps a brief look at Cannon, the company that most epitomized the successes and excesses of independent production and distribution, will help to put the independents' organizational structure and function in perspective.

Cannon

A purveyor of 'B' grade action/adventure films, Cannon was purchased for $350,000 in 1979 by Israeli cousins Menahen Golan and Yoram Globus. Under their guidance, the firm dominated the independent production scene throughout the mid-1980s, often outdoing the majors in the sheer volume of films produced. By 1985, Cannon had grabbed a two percent market share (see Table 3). Yet, by the end of the 1980s, Cannon had been sold to Pathe and film production had been cut in half. What caused this turnaround?

Initially, Cannon seemed to perfect the formula that steered itself and other independents to success. The firm spent less than half the mid-1980s industry standard ($14 million for majors) to make their movies and followed the studios' rule for success -- "give audiences a happy ending."[32] To finance their films, Cannon pre-sold pay cable and videocassette rights, knowing that even if a movie proved to be a 'dog' at the box office, the ancillary and foreign markets should allow the movie to break even.[33]

Although Cannon decided to assume a greater risk by distributing its own pictures in 1982, the firm's production and distribution strategies initially appeared to work. By 1986, Cannon had a 2,000 title film library, distribution agreements in six countries and chains of theaters both in the U.S. and in England.[34] The trouble for Cannon may have begun when it decided to imitate the blockbuster formula common to the majors. The firm discovered that big production budgets and action matinee stars like Chuck Norris did not yield a proportionate return from the box office. A series of costly mid-1980s flops like the $25 million Over the Top which made only $8 million in rentals and the $20 million Masters of the Universe which earned an equally low $7.7 in rentals proved extremely costly for Cannon.

Cannon's rapid distribution jump (see Table 1) from three pictures in 1983 to 24 pictures in 1985 required a tremendous infusion of cash. And, as Cannon learned, head counts of titles do not lead to box office success. Profits from its two dozen films did not appear to cover the firm's interest and overhead.[35]

By 1986 Business Week claimed Cannon "looked like a house of cards."[36] Five class action suits alleging violations of federal securities requirements were pending, charges of inflated revenues and earnings abounded and a $430 million debt -- nearly four times the firm's equity -- plagued Cannon.[37]

Shortly thereafter Cannon was absorbed by Pathe, production was slashed and a new distribution direction -- allowing most of its product to be distributed by the majors, was instituted. Cannon appeared to have become a victim of bad management. The firm turned away from its original low-budget, 'B' film moneymaking formula and began producing large numbers of 'B' films on 'A' budgets. Thus, free-spending plus the unstable economic conditions of the 1980s brought Cannon to the verge of bankruptcy.

Keys to Success

Like the majors, the independents' fortunes rest on three main factors: the creative aspect of the film, the scheduling and release dates of a film, and the marketing of the movie.

Creativity

The creative aspect -- the actual selection and production of a movie -- is the most risky financial factor, often leading to corporate reorganizations such as DEG, Filmways and others when major-budgeted films like The Right Stuff fail. These instances demonstrate the fragility of financial stability in an industry where the precious commodity of creativity is ever-changing.

Since the beginning of motion pictures, executives have sought to minimize risk through 'sure-fire' formulas that would insure box office success. As Dominick's research pointed out, the majors tend to seek homogeneity among their product.[38] Sequelization is one current example. Some of the top grossing films of the last few years included two Indiana Jones films, Die Hard II, Robo Cop II, The Karate Kid III, Back to the Future II and III, Start Trek V and Friday the 13th Part VII. Another such strategy often employed by the majors is to lean toward the blockbuster -- big name stars and directors and lavish production and marketing budgets -- factors which can be profitably exploited in both domestic and foreign markets.

In contrast, the tighter-budgeted independents have traditionally relied on unknown or lesser-known actors, writers and directors. The independents do not tend to have the substantial film libraries (except the Samuel Goldwyn Company) or the properties to generate the internal cash flow necessary to attract big name talent.

Despite these cash flow problems, many of the more successful independents imitate the creative strategies of the majors, such as creating blockbuster films and producing products that reflect a creative sameness, albeit on a smaller scale. Cannon in particular attempted the blockbuster formula with such high-budgeted movies as the $31 million Pirates that yielded scant returns. They also followed the sequel path with the Missing in Action series of films starring Chuck Norris. Other companies like Galaxy, which distributes Halloween and its near-endless series of sequels and New Line Cinema which distributes the A Nightmare on Elm Street films also profited from sequelization. Despite such imitations of the majors, the independents, on average, have lower negative costs per picture than do the majors[39] because it is less expensive to produce and launch horror films than movies of other genres.

Scheduling and Release Patterns

The scheduling and release patterns of a film also are essential factors in determining a film's potential financial success. If the independents are to be considered actual competition to the majors for box office revenues, the number of screens their films occupy should be comparable to that of the majors. Sadly, this is not the case. Of the weekly 50 top grossing films in 1988, the majors averaged 143 screens per release.[40] The independents lagged far behind with an average of only 24.5.

Almost half of the films released by independents debuted at under 10 screens, and many at only one screen.

These findings give support to Litman and Kohl's data. As mentioned above, some of the independents have gained enough strength and capital to perform the same quality distribution as the majors but on a smaller scale.[41] Independents bank on release dates to aid distribution. An examination of Variety reveals many of the independents release their films during traditionally slack periods such as late summer, early fall, late winter and late spring. For example, Variety reported that independent releases accounted for the majority of April releases in 1989.[42] Such release dates, generally after Easter, allow the independents approximately a month of box office revenues and often little studio competition before the first summer studio films are released in mid-May.

Despite these off-peak windows of opportunity, independents still fail to match the majors in saturation releases. For example, less than a dozen of the independents released in 1989 achieved saturation releases.[43] The cost of prints and advertising still represent barriers to successful entry into film distribution and may explain why comparatively few independent films can equal the muscle of most major studios.[44]

Also important to a film's financial success is the length of its run. As Figure 1 shows, the top five grossing releases by the major studios during the summer of 1989 averaged six weeks of screen stability before beginning a slow decline. By comparison, the independents averaged only three weeks of screen stability, experienced a more rapid decline and then quickly disappeared. This suggests that the bulk of the revenues these films earn must be generated during that three week stable period. The data from Table 4 appears to support this conclusion. Most independent films earned the bulk of their revenues by the third week. Furthermore, 43 percent of the summer 1989 independents did not even survive until the third week! Therefore, these films had to make all of the money in the one or two week period in which they were screened. Under the current scheme of things, there simply wouldn't be enough weeks available for normal length runs for these independents even if released during slack periods when the majors are dormant.

Marketing

The independents have managed to cut their promotion and marketing costs by linking these to their release dates. By virtue of targeting individual markets sequentially, the independents can spend less on promotion than do the majors. Even when the independents have promotional budgets comparable to the majors, hype and national advertising are no guarantees of success since word-of-mouth publicity will be the key form of publicity after the initial advertising blitz. Of the top five grossing independent films for the summer of 1989, all but Sex, Lies and Videotape lost money, many by substantial amounts. Sex, Lies and Videotape earned $10 million at the box office. The film's negative cost was only $1 million but another $5 million was spent on promotion. Criminal Law cost $7 million to make and another $6 million was spent on advertising; however, the film earned only $3.9 million at the box office. Of course as noted above, success at the theatrical box office was not absolutely critical if subsidiary windows could guarantee reasonable returns.

To examine the barriers independents face within two of these three critical areas--the creative aspect and scheduling and release, a case study of five major metropolitan markets, Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Kansas City and Seattle was undertaken. Because the data for marketing and promotion costs for each city is proprietary, this third factor was not included in the case study. Of interest was whether the aforementioned national trends would also appear in local markets.

The Case Study

The names of the independent films released between May 14 and Labor Day were obtained from Variety magazine's weekly movie release listings. Then a convenience sample of cities was selected based on several factors: geographic diversity, number of available screens, dissimilarity in ownership patterns and knowledge of the markets by the co-authors. The census bureau's metropolitan statistical area listings (which included the immediate city and surrounding suburbs) were used to determine the geographic boundaries of each market area. After obtaining a listing of every movie screen in each market area, newspaper advertisements (and in some cases phone calls) provided the basic data on what independent films were showing each week and on how many screens. Before the results of the data are listed, a brief explanation of each market is provided.

Atlanta boasts six theater chains, four of which are national--United Artists, General Cinema, AMC and Cineplex Odeon, as well as two local chains and several smaller independent theaters. While the chain theaters do screen some art/independently produced films, the independent theaters primarily are responsible for screening the majority of art/independent films.

Unlike Atlanta, Boston is a well-known art film theater mecca which features an average of 20 screens for art/independently produced films at any given time. Concentration of screen ownership within Boston proper changed in the mid-1980s with the purchase of all screens, first by USA Cinemas and finally by Loews, resulting in Boston proper becoming a monopoly ownership city.[45] Independently owned cinemas still exist in adjacent Brookline and Cambridge. The suburban theaters tend toward chain ownership with General Cinemas and Showcase Cinemas the predominant chains.

Like Boston, Kansas City is also a monopoly town. AMC's 101 screens at 21 locations gives the theater chain a 68 percent share of Kansas City's theater market. The other national chain, United Artists, features only 12 screens at three locations. Kansas City also has several independent theaters including two predominantly arts/independent film theaters. Because Kansas City is not an art-film town like Boston, the city's screening is not an art-film town like Boston, the city's screening patterns may be more representative of a monopoly city's release patterns.

Seattle also is an arts/independent film theater city. Unlike Boston, Seattle's theater ownership patterns are more diverse. Four national chains--AMC, United Artists, General Cinemas and Cineplex Odeon, as well as several local chains and a number of independent cinemas dot the city.

Detroit's theater exhibition and ownership patterns are quite different from the other case study cities. Only one cinema within Detroit is considered to be an art cinema. Two suburban cinemas also feature independent/foreign fare but not exclusively. Ownership of the cinemas in metropolitan Detroit is divided up between four major chains: AMC, United Artists, General Cinemas and Showcase Cinemas. A few neighborhood, independently run cinemas do exist, but they tend not to be first-run theaters.

Hence, the Atlanta, Seattle and Detroit markets more accurately reflect national theater ownership patterns than do Kansas City or Boston which might properly be labelled monopoly towns.

The screen count for this study is as follows: greater Atlanta: 275 screens; greater Boston: 84 screens; greater Seattle, 172 screens; greater Kansas City, 149 screens; and, greater Detroit 160 screens. The disparity in screen count is largely due to a "scale effect" reflecting differences in both population and geographical area within the five markets. Therefore, Atlanta, Kansas City, Seattle and Detroit have far more screens as does Boston because these cities possess larger geographic areas, and in the case of Detroit, a larger population. As Table 4 shows, 55 independently distributed films were released from May 14 to September 3, 1989. As Tables 5-9 demonstrate, a simple count of the films released in the three markets revealed that the greatest diversity of independents-- 32 films (58 percent of all the films) were screened in Boston and Seattle. Despite having approximately three times as many screens as Boston, Atlanta was second, showing 28 independent films (50 percent).

The first question for the analysis is what films were shown and why? Several patterns become apparent. First, films that had runs of three weeks or more and that appeared in the five markets at the time of their national release or within a week of their national release date paralleled the major studios' creative patterns. Sequels, such as Nightmare on Elm Street Pt. 5, Eddie and the Cruisers Pt. 2 and Fright Night Pt. 2; films with big name stars, such as Jacknife starring Robert DeNiro, Earth Girls are Easy starring Jeff Goldblum and No Holds Barred featuring wresting star Hulk Hogan; and consistently popular genres, particularly horror/slasher films were the releases that were shown on the most screens and stayed for the longest runs in all five cities. Hence, national popularity transplanted into the five local markets.

A second, and related, pattern is that the majority of the independent films that gained the most success[46] nationally also fared well in all five markets. Of the top five independent releases, all but Cyborg were successful in all the case study markets. Cyborg is missing from Boston during the case study months. The answer may be that since the film was released in April, it may have finished its run before the current case study began. Despite this discrepancy, as Tables 5-9 show, the majority of the top five and top ten nationally successful films were screened in the local markets the same week as their national releases.

Lag time since release does not appear to follow any sort of normal curve for the large metro markets, but the data reveal that most of the films that were less successful nationally often did not reach any of the five cities while others took over a month from their release date before they were screened.

By comparison, as Tables 5-9 demonstrate, foreign films, like Little Dorrit and Warm Nights on a Slow Moving Train and films with lesser known stars, writers or directors that didn't attain solid national box office success, in general, received shorter runs and debuted at fewer cinemas within the five local markets. With the exception of a few films in Boston (A Taxing Woman's Return, Paper House and Little Vera), and some in Seattle (The Rainbow, Crusoe, and Miracle Mile), most independent films ran for less than three weeks and were shown on only one screen.

While national popularity patterns do explain some of the success independents achieved in local markets, the findings do not completely explain the results. The demographic characteristics of each market and the concentration patterns also may explain the successes and failures of independent films within and across these markets.

As mentioned above, more films were exhibited in the metro Boston and Seattle areas. While these cities' traditions as art/independent film cities appears to be the main factor which explains why they lead in independent films screened, income and education factors also may influence what films are shown. As Table 10 shows, both cities have the highest incomes of the five case study cities. Furthermore, residents of both cities also possess high education levels. This suggests that such film audiences may prefer films more diverse in both theme and source (i.e., country of origin) than do audiences with less education and income.

By itself, the number of independent films screened in a market is a potentially misleading indicator of success. When the other three proxy variables (length of stay, weeks since national release and weekly screen patterns) for a film's success are taken into account, independent films screened in Boston and Seattle may not have been greatly more successful than those screened in the other three cities. Films in Boston and Seattle ran on fewer screens on a weekly basis than did films in the other three cities. This suggests that the average number of screens independent films accessed in Boston and Seattle presumably generated less revenue than did films with larger exhibition patterns.

Concentration of theater ownership patterns in the five markets also seems a potentially important indicator of an independent film's success. The commonly expected result is that as ownership becomes more concentrated, screenings of independent films should drop as chains attempt to screen big money-making films. The Kansas City data supports this assumption, but the conclusion should be regarded carefully as Kansas City is the only true monopoly market in the study. Exhibition patterns in Kansas City reveal that only 19 independent films were screened there. Furthermore, the lag time since national release is much longer than the lag time for the other four case study cities. The metro Boston area cannot be considered a true monopoly market despite the fact that all screens in Boston proper are owned by Loews since the study area included surrounding suburbs. Furthermore, Boston's tradition as an art film city also skews the findings based on screen ownership. Although Loews purchased all of the art/foreign film theaters, the chain has continued the screening pattern of exhibiting foreign/art films at all of these theaters. A more complete study focusing on only monopoly markets' release patterns should yield more conclusive results.

Release patterns for Detroit and Atlanta, the two non-art film markets, demonstrate that only about 50 percent of all independent films released from May to September were screened. This gives some support to the independent filmmakers' claims that their films are not obtaining wide-scale release. Similarly, independent filmmakers' claim that when box office receipts begin to drop off for a lesser known film that film seems to be replaced much more quickly than do films with known stars and actors is also supported by the case study data (i.e., compare Figure 1 with the weekly screen patterns of Tables 5-9). Given the tentative nature of the results, perhaps the most that can be said for the variable of concentration is that a tendency exists for chain owners to prefer the majors' films over those of the independents.

Therefore, given the possibility that concentration of ownership may limit distribution, the success of independent films in major metropolitan markets seems dependent on creative strategies that mimic the major studios. A city's high socioeconomic status may lead to a more diverse slate of films within the market, but such a population's status is not a sufficient condition of an independent film's success.

Related to the factors that determine a film's success, although not part of this study, are the factors of quality and marketing. A potential future investigation could take the case study's data and examine whether or not the quality of the films, as determined by local and national reviews, influenced the four proxy variables of local market success. Furthermore, another future study might be able to obtain or determine a measure of local marketing strength (such as newspaper column inches of advertising) and compare the expenditures of majors and independents on both the national and local levels to see if this is a significant determinant of a film's success.

Conclusion

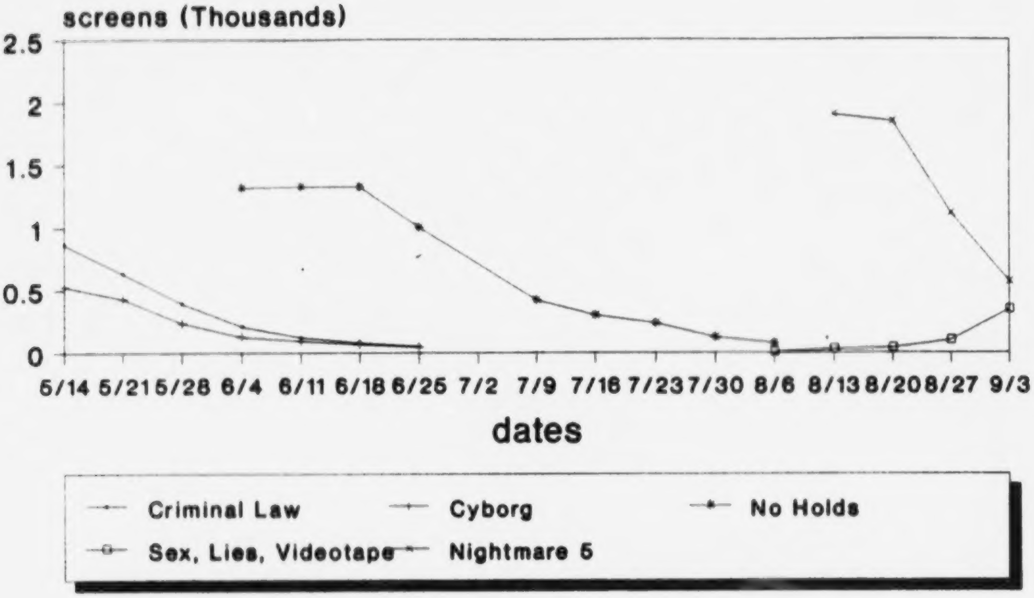
Independent filmmakers in the 1980s were able to gain a toehold in market shares and reduce the film industry's overall level of concentration through a combination of advantageous market conditions, such as the rapid growth of homevideo, the sharp rise in the number of cable MSOs and subscribers, the theater construction boom, the growth of the foreign market, and tight-fisted management policies. Yet, overspending on films, inflated visions of how many pictures could be produced, too little cash for production, a large number of flops (some of which went straight to videocassette release) and, perhaps most lethal of all, a glut of films in the late 1980s forced the reorganization of an already precarious and financially unstable independent film industry.

Like the major studios, the independents discovered that a motion picture's success relied on three critical factors: the creative aspects of a film, the scheduling and release patterns and advertising and marketing. Uncertainty over an ever-changing product led many of the more successful independents to imitate the creative strategies of the majors, such as through the making of blockbusters, sequels, and films that reflected a creative sameness, albeit on a smaller scale.

Despite these attempts to latch onto the majors' formulas for success, the independents, both individually and as an aggregate, never became actual competition to the majors for box office revenues because their products rarely obtained the lengthy runs, saturation releases and proximity of local to national release dates that the majors are able to muster on a regular basis. The majors' financial power, their use of established distribution networks and their investments into the ancillary markets have kept much of the industry still concentrated within their grasp.

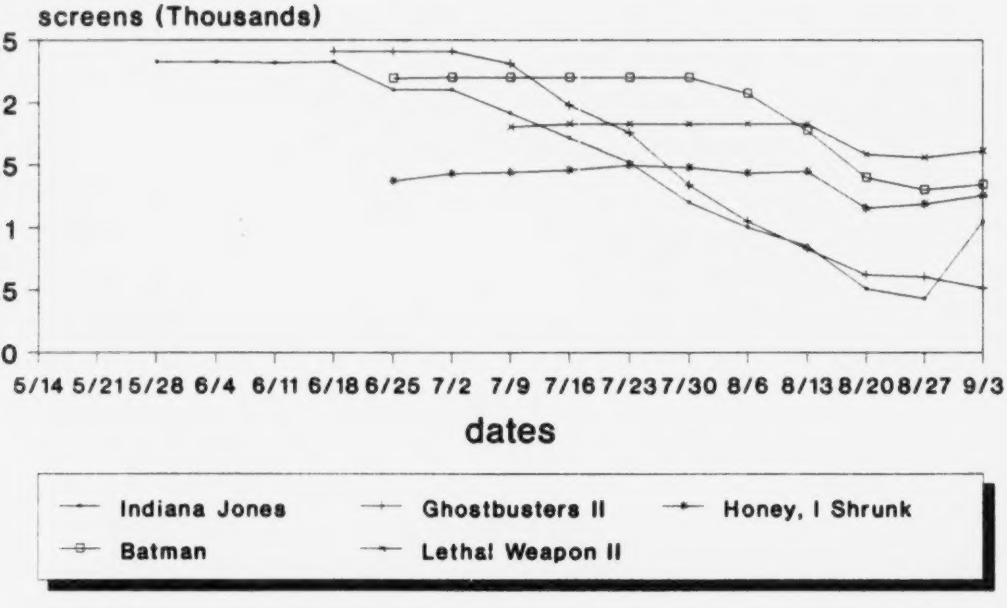
The case study suggests that on the local level, owners of chain-operated theaters select films based on national patterns of creative and marketing success. For the most part, chain theaters want films with known elements that feature well-known plots, themes, star and/or directors. While films screened by chain-owned theaters may be less diverse in theme and country of origin than films exhibited at traditional art theaters, chain-owned theaters offer lengthier runs and thus offer the potential for greater box office revenues for their films. Markets with relatively affluent, well-educated populations also may result in more diverse release patterns. Therefore, the key factors in independent film success within a market appear to be market size and demographics.

Figure 1



Independents

Source: Variety Magazine



Majors

Source: Variety Magazine

Table 1

U.S. MOTION PICTURE RELEASES BY COMPANY 1980-1989

	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
Columbia	10	10	14	12	10	17	20	14	17	21
MGM/UA	23	17	20	18	18	16	11	14	21	22
Paramount	12	20	15	15	12	13	16	12	16	13
20th Cent.	13	16	15	20	16	18	19	13	12	13
Universal	14	21	19	23	19	20	14	16	19	16
Warner Bros.	19	18	18	20	23	26	22	17	25	24
Disney	3	3	3	4	2	6	7	10	12	11
Orion	3	4	5	9	12	14	15	13	17	14
Tri-Star	--	--	--	--	14	12	20	18	16	18
Cannon	--	--	1	3	na	24	26	27	23	12
Cinecom	5	na	na	na	na	6	12	6	6	5
DLG	--	--	--	--	--	--	11	9	--	--
Embassy	4	10	8	7	4	2	--	--	--	--
Atlantic	na	na	na	na	na	7	7	9	8	1
S. Goldwyn	na	na	na	na	na	9	5	8	na	na
Island	na	na	na	na	na	10	6	7	na	na
Lorimar	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	5	na	na
New Century	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	11	5	5
New World	1	2	3	3	na	21	35	22	15	3
Vestron	--	--	--	--	--	--	na	15	16	10
Others	69	52	159	261	280	267	185	235	215	133
Total	171	173	280	395	410	452	432	515	513	446

Key: na = not available -- = not in production that year
Source: Variety, annual editions; International Motion Picture Almanac, annual editions.

Table 2

TOTAL NUMBER OF SCREENS FOR TOP TEN GROSSING FILMS: 5/14 to 9/3*

5/14	5/21	5/28	6/4	6/11	6/18
12,858	12,934	14,770	14,811	15,114	14,975
6/25	7/2	7/9	7/16	7/23	7/30
15,455	15,023	15,290	15,218	15,286	15,539
8/6	8/13	8/20	8/27	9/3	
15,011	14,475	14,382	14,345	14,184	

*= All were released by the major studios but the top 10 changes weekly.
Source: Variety, summer 1989 editions.

Table 3

Market Shares for North American Film Distributors,* 1981-1986

Company	89	88	87	86	85	84	83	82	81	80
Columbia	8%	3%	4%	9%	10%	16%	14%	10%	13%	14%
20th-Fox	6	11	9	8	11	10	21	14	13	16
MGM-UA	6	10	4	4	9	7	10	11	9	7
Paramount	14	16	20	22	10	21	14	14	15	16
Universal	17	10	8	9	16	8	13	30	14	20
Warners	19	11	13	12	18	19	17	10	18	14
Disney	14	20	14	10	3	4	3	4	3	4
Orion	4	7	10	7	5	5	4	3	1	2
Tri-Star	7	6	5	7	10	5	--	--	--	--
Embassy	--	--	--	1	n	1	1	5	3	--
Atlantic	--	n	n	1	1	1	.5	n	--	--
Cannon	.7	1	1	2	2	1	--	n	--	--
New World	--	.6	2	3	1	1	1	1	3	--
Goldwyn	--	n	.5	.5	1	--	n	n	--	--
Crown	--	--	n	n	1	1	.5	n	.5	n
Isl.Alive	--	n	n	1	.5	n	--	--	--	--
Empire	--	--	--	n	.5	--	--	--	--	--
Circle	--	--	--	--	n	--	--	--	--	--
DEG(Emb.)	--	--	1	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Miller	--	--	--	--	n	--	--	--	--	--
UFDC	--	--	--	--	n	--	n	--	--	--
Internatl.	--	n	--	--	n	n	n	--	--	--
New Line	1	2	2	.5	n	n	n	--	--	--
New Century	n	--	.7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Lorimar	--	.8	.6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Vestron	n	n	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Miramax	.8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CR4	65%	58%	57%	53%	55%	66%	66%	68%	60%	66%
CR8	95%	94%	82%	84%	79%	91%	96%	96%	90%	94%
CR6	91%	87%	58%	64%	74%	81%	89%	89%	82%	87%
H-H Index	.12	.12	.11	.11	.11	.13	.14	.16	.12	.18
Instab.Index	45%	33%	30%	49%	37%	40%	39%	40%	22%	

Key: n= negligible (between .1 and .5%)
-- = not in distribution that year

*Market Share = percentage of annual film rentals to distributor.

CR_n = aggregate market share of top N firms

CR6 = concentration ratio of major studios. From 1988 onward, the CR6 becomes the CR7.

H-H Index = $\sum_{i=1}^{N}(S_i^2)$ is the sum of the squared market shares for all companies in a particular year.

Instab. Index = $I = \sum_{i=1}^{N}|S_i^{t+1} - S_i^t|$ is the sum of the absolute value difference in market shares between two time periods for all companies.

Source: Variety, annual edition, various years

Table 4

RENTALS FOR INDEPENDENT SUMMER FILMS, SUMMER 1989

	TITLE	MID-CUM THRESHOLD*	TOTAL CUM**
1.	NIGHTMARE ON ELM ST. 5	17,650,275	19,709,478
2.	NO HOLDS BARRED	12,201,187	16,093,651
3.	SEX, LIES, VIDEOTAPE	2,118,355	10,821,382
4.	CYBORG	9,820,017	10,030,875
5.	CRIMINAL LAW	9,085,862	9,443,550
6.	SCANDAL	6,418,402	7,782,384
7.	SHAG: THE MOVIE	5,537,034	6,491,277
8.	DREAM A LITTLE DREAM	---------	5,538,574
9.	TORCH SONG TRILOGY	---------	4,853,376
10.	EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY	2,887,305	3,916,303
11.	NIGHT OF THE DEMONS	---------	3,020,013
12.	976-EVIL	2,955,917	2,955,917
13.	FRIGHT NIGHT PT. 2	1,878,675	2,350,289
14.	SCENES FROM THE CLASS-STRUGGLE IN BEVERLY HILLS	503,824	2,133,931
15.	PELLE THE CONQUEROR	---------	2,053,931
16.	JACKNIFE	2,049,769	2,049,769
17.	MISS FIRECRACKER	1,465,552	1,852,655
18.	VINCENT	1,459,834	1,566,377
19.	BABAR: THE MOVIE	---------	1,305,187
20.	HIGH HOPES	934,162	1,192,322
21.	LITTLE VERA	522,545	1,168,464
22.	MIRACLE MILE	770,272	1,092,822
23.	LITTLE DORRIT	---------	992,000
24.	THE NAVIGATOR	349,788	948,211
25.	GETTING IT RIGHT	384,238	890,406
26.	WIRED	---------	882,344
27.	PARENTS	---------	870,532
28.	THE TERROR WITHIN	---------	858,591
28.	TOXIC AVENGER PT. 2	709,848	784,161
30.	VAMPIRE'S KISS	429,316	600,804
31.	EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS 2	---------	540,000
32.	SECOND ANIMATION CELEB.	189,258	446,512
33.	THE RAINBOW	239,566	445,055
34.	DISTANT VOICES, STILL LIVES	35,743	343,246
35.	A TAXING WOMAN'S RETURN	---------	319,976
36.	CRUSOE	298,707	315,421
37.	WARM NIGHTS ON A SLOW-MOVING TRAIN	---------	280,613
38.	PAPERHOUSE	206,628	241,278
39.	FIST FIGHTER	---------	221,163
40.	COLD FEET	145,591	216,917
41.	FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY	191,051	191,051
42.	HELL HIGH	---------	166,411
43.	FOUR ADVENTURES OF REINETTE AND MIRABELLE	---------	160,479

Table 4 continued

	TITLE	MID-CUMULATIVE	TOTAL CUM
44.	DEPECHE MODE 101	---------	109,538
45.	THE LITTLE THIEF	---------	84,071
46.	MICHELANGELO:SELF PORTRAIT	56,814	72,412
47.	WONDERLAND	---------	64,137
48.	A CHORUS OF DISAPPROVAL	---------	52,575
49.	A FLAME IN MY HEART	26,707	38,178
50.	MAGIC TOY SHOP	---------	19,252
51.	ON THE BLACK HILL	18,590	18,590
52.	VALENTINO RETURNS	---------	15,954
53.	FAR FROM HOME	---------	11,859
54.	GINGER ALE AFTERNOON	---------	9,216
55.	BERLIN BLUES	---------	1,650

*Mid-cum threshold represents 3 weeks. This was determined by the point at which most films dropped off financially.

**Total Cumulative represents the total box office receipts reported by the time the film dropped off _Variety_'s "Weekend Boxoffice Report" chart.

------- = charted less than 3 weeks or did not chart the third week.

Source: _Variety_, 1989 annual edition.

Table 5

INDEPENDENT FILM RELEASES IN DETROIT: SUMMER 1989

TITLE	LENGTH OF STAY	WEEKS SINCE NATL. RELEASE	SCREEN PATTERN WEEK BY WEEK
1. NIGHTMARE ELM ST.	4	0	11,10,8,4
2. NO HOLDS BARRED	7	0	10,11,10,10,9,6,1
3. SEX, LIES,	1	4	8
4. CYBORG	3*	1	1,1,1
5. CRIMINAL LAW	6	0	10,10,6,5,1,1
6. SCANDAL	7	0	5,3,2,2,2,1,2
7. SHAG:THE MOVIE	6	0	6,7,2,4,5,2
8. EARTH GIRLS	5	3	3,3,4,3,1
9. FRIGHT NIGHT 2	8	0	9,11,8,6,6,6,3,1
10. CLASS STRUGGLE	6	7	1,1,1,1,1,1
11. PELLE	10*	0	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1
11. JACKNIFE	6*	0	1,1,1,1,1,1
12. MISS FIRECRACKER	4	0	3,3,2,2
13. BABAR: THE MOVIE	5	0	9,9,5,1,2
14. HIGH HOPES	5	11	1,1,1,1,1
15. MIRACLE MILE	2	3	1
16. NAVIGATOR	2*	12	1,1
17. GETTING IT RIGHT	3	7	1,1,1
18. WIRED	2	0	4,4
19. PARENTS	5	2	1
20. EDDIE & CRUISERS	3	0	4,7,2
21. DISTANT VOICES	2	4	1,1
21. CRUSOE	2	5	1,1
22. WARM NIGHTS	2	0	1,1
23. FIST FIGHTER	4*	0	10,1,1,1
24. COLD FEET	2	0	1,1
25. QUEEN & COUNTRY	2	0	4,2
26. HELL HIGH	1	0	9
	-----	-----	-----
	$\bar{x}=4$	$\bar{x}=2.2$	$\bar{x}=3.3$

* = run was not during consecutive weeks.

Table 6

INDEPENDENT FILM RELEASES IN BOSTON: SUMMER 1989

	TITLE	LENGTH OF STAY	WEEKS SINCE NATL. RELEASE	SCREEN PATTERN WEEK BY WEEK
1.	NIGHTMARE ELM ST.	4	0	6,7,6,4
2.	NO HOLDS BARRED	6	0	7,7,7,6,3,1
3.	SEX, LIES	4	1	3,3,3,8
4.	CRIMINAL LAW	6	0	8,6,4,1,1,1
5.	SCANDAL	11*	0	6,6,4,3,2,3,2,1,1,1,1
6.	SHAG:THE MOVIE	5	0	6,3,2,1,1
7.	EARTH GIRLS	12*	0	7,7,6,6,5,4,2,1,2,3,2,1
8.	CLASS STRUGGLE	9	2	1,2,2,1,1,1,2,1,1
9.	PELLE	7	0	1,1,1,1,1,1,1
10.	MISS FIRECRACKER	3	9	1,1,1
11.	BABAR:THE MOVIE	3	0	7,4,1
12.	HIGH HOPES	4	0	1,1,1,1
13.	LITTLE VERA	9*	0	2,2,3,2,1,1,1,1,1
14.	MIRACLE MILE	5	3	1,1,1,1,1
15.	LITTLE DORRIT	1	9	1
16.	THE NAVIGATOR	7	9	1,1,1,1,1,1,1
17.	WIRED	1	1	5
18.	PARENTS	1	16	1
19.	TOXIC AVENGER 2	2	3	1,1
20.	VAMPIRE'S KISS	4	0	1,1,1,1
21.	EDDIE & CRUISERS	2	0	4,3
22.	ANIMATION CELEB.	5	1	1,1,1,1,1
23.	THE RAINBOW	7	6	1,1,1,1,1,1,1
24.	DISTANT VOICES	3	3	1,1,1
25.	TAXING WOMAN'S	6*	0	1,1,1,1,1,1
26.	CRUSOE	1	2	1
27.	WARM NIGHTS	2	0	1,1
28.	PAPER HOUSE	11*	2	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1
29.	COLD FEET	1	1	1
30.	FOUR ADVENTURES	2	0	1,1
31.	DEPECHE MODE	2	14	1,1
32.	WONDERLAND	1	5	5
		-----	-----	-----
		$\bar{x}$=4.5	$\bar{x}$=2.7	$\bar{x}$=2.1

* = run was not during consecutive weeks

Table 7

INDEPENDENT FILM RELEASES IN KANSAS CITY: SUMMER 1989

	TITLE	LENGTH OF STAY	WEEKS SINCE NATL. RELEASE	SCREEN PATTERN WEEK BY WEEK
1.	NIGHTMARE ELM ST.	4	0	9,6,6,3
2.	NO HOLDS BARRED	6	0	8,8,5,6,2,1
3.	SEX, LIES	2	3	4,4
4.	CRIMINAL LAW	7	0	5,2,2,2,1,4,2
5.	SCANDAL	6	0	5,5,3,1,1,1
6.	SHAG:THE MOVIE	6	0	4,4,2,3,2,2
7.	EARTH GIRLS	3	13	1,1,1
8.	CLASS STRUGGLE	2	8	1,1
9.	MISS FIRECRACKER	5	0	5,5,2,1
10.	BABAR:THE MOVIE	2	0	6,5
11.	HIGH HOPES	2	3	1,1
12.	LITTLE VERA	2	7	1,1
13.	GETTING IT RIGHT	2	9	1,1
14.	EDDIE & CRUISERS	3	0	6,6,1
15.	PAPER HOUSE	1	3	1
16.	THE NAVIGATOR	1	16	1
17.	WIRED	2	0	6,6
18.	VAMPIRE'S KISS	1	15	1
19.	NIGHT OF DEMONS	1	15	1
		$\bar{X}=3$	$\bar{X}=4.8$	$\bar{X}=3.2$

* = run was not during consecutive weeks

Table 8

INDEPENDENT FILM RELEASES IN ATLANTA: SUMMER 1989

TITLE	LENGTH OF STAY	WEEKS SINCE NATL. RELEASE	SCREEN PATTERN WEEK BY WEEK
1. NIGHTMARE ELM ST.	4	0	20,18,16,16
2. NO HOLDS BARRED	5*	0	16,16,14,6,1
3. SEX, LIES	3	0	1,1,1
4. CRIMINAL LAW	8*	0	16,11,6,6,5,4,2,1
5. SCANDAL	6*	0	13,13,11,7,4,1
6. CYBORG	3	2	3,1,1
7. SHAG:THE MOVIE	7	0	13,11,9,7,3,2,2
8. EARTH GIRLS	10	2	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1
9. CLASS STRUGGLE	6	1	1,1,1,1,1,1
10. MISS FIRECRACKER	3	0	7,7,11
11. FRIGHT NIGHT II	7*	6	13,9,7,4,1,1,4
12. 976-EVIL	3	2	1,1,1
13. NIGHT OF DEMONS	7	0	22,10,7,1,1,1,1
14. BABAR:THE MOVIE	4	0	14,14,19,2
15. HIGH HOPES	2	0	1,1
16. LITTLE VERA	3	12	1,1,1
17. MIRACLE MILE	2	2	1,1
18. GETTING IT RIGHT	3	11	1,1,1
19. WIRED	2	0	17,6
20. VAMPIRE'S KISS	4	6	1,1,1,1
21. EDDIE & CRUISERS	3	0	9,8,4
22. THE RAINBOW	6	4	1,1,1,1,1,1,
23. QUEEN AND COUNTRY	1	8	3
24. PAPER HOUSE	3	0	1,1,1
25. COLD FEET	1	0	1
26. FIST FIGHTER	2	3	7,1
27. HELL HIGH	1	3	2
28. WONDERLAND	2	6	1,1
	$\bar{x}=4$	$\bar{x}=2.4$	$\bar{x}=4.8$

* = run was not during consecutive weeks

Table 9

INDEPENDENT FILM RELEASES IN SEATTLE: SUMMER 1989

	TITLE	LENGTH OF STAY	WEEKS SINCE NATL. RELEASE	SCREEN PATTERN WEEK BY WEEK
1.	NIGHTMARE ELM ST.	3	0	8,6,2
2.	NO HOLDS BARRED	5	0	8,8,2,1,1
3.	SEX, LIES	4	2	1,1,3,4
4.	CYBORG	5	0	1,1,1,1,1
5.	CRIMINAL LAW	7	0	5,4,2,2,1,1,1
6.	SCANDAL	17	0	5,6,4,4,2,3,2,1,1,1, 1,2,1,1,2,1,1
7.	SHAG:THE MOVIE	7	0	7,6,5,1,1,1,1
8.	EARTH GIRLS	14	2	1,1,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,1, 1,1,1,1
9.	NIGHT OF DEMONS	1	0	3
10.	CLASS STRUGGLE	6	1	1,1,1,1,1,1
11.	PELLE	1	7	1
12.	MISS FIRECRACKER	7	0	7,6,2,2,1,1,1
13.	BABAR:THE MOVIE	6	0	10,7,4,3,1,1
14.	HIGH HOPES	2	0	1,1
15.	LITTLE VERA	6	0	1,1,1,1,1,1
16.	MIRACLE MILE	12	3	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1
17.	THE NAVIGATOR	5*	0	1,1,1,1,1
18.	GETTING IT RIGHT	10	0	4,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1
19.	WIRED	2	0	2,2
20.	PARENTS	1	4	1
21.	TOXIC AVENGER 2	1	12	1
22.	VAMPIRE'S KISS	4	0	1,1,1,1
23.	EDDIE & CRUISERS	3	0	3,3,1
24.	THE RAINBOW	12	4	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1
25.	DISTANT VOICES	3	3	1,1,1
26.	TAXING WOMAN'S	5*	0	1,1,1,2,1
27.	CRUSOE	13*	0	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1 1,1
28.	PAPER HOUSE	1	3	1
29.	COLD FEET	7	1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1
30.	FOUR ADVENTURES	3	0	1,1,1
31.	HELL HIGH	1	3	4
32.	MICHELANGELO	2	0	1,1
		-----	-----	-----
		$\bar{X}=5.2$	$\bar{x}=1.4$	$\bar{x}=1.75$

* = run was not during consecutive weeks

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CASE STUDY CITIES

Metro	Pop.	Income*	Educ.**
Boston	2,718,100	$74,932	76/23
Detroit	3,887,300	$51,621	69/15
Atlanta	1,715,000	$52,502	68/20
Kansas C.	1,517,000	$48,118	82/35
Seattle	1,692,035	$55,441	82/24

*Income= average household income for the metro area.

**Education= percent of population that has completed high school and percent of population that has had at least four years of college. For example, 60/40 means that 60 percent of the residents have completed high school. Of those individuals, 40 percent also have four years or more of college.

Source: State and Metropolitan Area Data Book; City and County Data Book 1988; Places Rated Almanac

1. See Table 2.

2. Peter Hlavacek, "New Indies on a (Bank) Roll," Variety, 24 January 1990, 1.

3. Joseph R. Dominick, "Film Economics and Film Content: 1964-1983," in Current Research in Film: Audiences, Economics and Law (Vol. 3), ed. Bruce A. Austin, (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Co., 1987), 150.

4. Ibid., 138.

5. Barry R. Litman and Linda S. Kohl, "Predicting Financial Success of Motion Pictures: The '80s Experience," Journal of Media Economics, (Fall 1989), 35-50.

6. Ibid., 39-41.

7. Ibid., 47.

8. Ibid., 42.

9. Ibid., 42-43.

10. Ibid., 46.

11. Ibid., 46.

12. Aljean Harmetz, "Little films time release to dodge big sequels," Detroit Free Press, 16 May 1989, 4B.

13. Ibid., 43-44. For a breakdown of film budgets and advertising/marketing expenditures for both the independents and majors, see "1989 US Film Releases," Variety, 21 February, 1990.

14. Ibid., 43-44.

15. Ibid., 48; See also Variety, 10 January 1990, 5.

16. "Theatrical Film Revenue Mix," Variety, 20 January 1988, 96.

17. "Booming '80s Behind It, Vid Faces Uncertainty," Variety, 10 January 1990, 31.

18. David Ansen, Peter McAlevey, and Katrine Ames, "Hollywood Goes Independent," Newsweek, 6 April 1987, 64-66.

19. Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg, "Million-dollar Band-Aids," Forbes, 11 March 1985, 48-49.

20. Gerald Clarke, "Bring Back the Moguls!" Time, 13 January 1986, 72.

21. Debra Goldman, "Indie Boom Turns Bust," Premiere, May 1989, 33.

22. Lawrence Cohn, "As Prod'n Grew, More Films Went Without U.S. Release," Variety, 1989 (**date**), 5.

23. "Theatrical Films Revenue Mix," Variety, 20 January 1988, 96.

24. "Videotapes Give Hollywood A Second Shot at Success," 73.

25. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1989 Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989, 547.

26. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstracts of the United States: 1988, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988), 526.

27. Thomas Guback, "The Evolution of the Motion Picture Theater Business in the 1980s," Journal of Communication 37 (Spring 1987): 62 and 67.

28. Ibid., 71.

29. International Motion Picture Almanac, 61st ed., (New York: Quigley Publishing Co, 1990), 31A.

30. Ibid., 67

31. For more information on the structure of the independents, see: Alvin P. Sanoff, "The new shape of Hollywood," U.S. News & World Report, 3 March 1986, 67; Peter McAlevey and Annetta Miller, "Studio Commandos," Newsweek, 12 May 1986, 59; "Indie Boom Turns Bust," 31-32. For information on the structural changes going on within the independents, see "New Indies On A (Bank) Roll," 1 & 7.

32. "Bring Back the Moguls," 72.

33. Ibid.

34. "Cannon loses the star on its door," Business Week, 8 December 1986, 40.

35. Ibid.

36. "Cannon Loses the Star on Its Door," 40.

37. Ibid.

38. "Film Economics and Film Content," 138.

39. See "Big Buck Scorecard" annual editions of Variety. See also "Costs Vs. Domestic Rentals," Variety, 21 February 1990, 222.

40. Only the mean number of screens for the first two weeks of a picture's release was used in order to avoid a feedback effect (a picture's box office success leading to more screens rather than

more screens generating more rentals).

41. "Predicting Financial Success of Motion Pictures: The '80s Experience," 42.

42. Lawrence Cohn, "Indies Account for Bulk of April U.S. Releases," Variety, 3 May 1989, 9.

43. See "1989 U. S. Film Releases," Variety, 21 February 1990.

44. Lack of money for distribution can also stop a film's release altogether. For example, Atlantic, New World and Vestron collectively had 20 features finished and ready for screening in 1989 which were held back for lack of funds to produce the prints and advertisements.

45. Loews is owned by Columbia Pictures.

46. Success of a film is defined nationally as amount of the box office revenue a film generates. Absent a market-by-market breakdown, a film's success in local markets will be approximated by four proxy variables: appearance of a film in the market (i.e., did an independent get screened in a market), the film's length of stay in the market, the number of screens a film occupies in the market and the proximity of local to national release (i.e., the lag time).

Political Cartoons: A Semiotic Analysis

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(May 1990)

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STATEMENT OF CONTEXT

Politics and political campaigns are part and parcel of the formation and growth of government in this country, and along with government arose media coverage of the politicians, in the form of early newspapers. While George Washington was in office the first newspapers that recounted mainly commercial and business news began to be replaced in importance and popularity by partisan party papers. While the nature of media coverage of government has changed over the approximately two centuries since, the intensity of governmental reporting by the media remains as strong as ever.

Part of this media coverage of government has been in the form of political cartoons, or editorial cartoons as they are also known. Politically oriented graphics in fact pre-date the break of the American colonies away from England. Benjamin Franklin is credited with publishing the first political cartoon in a North American newspaper, in 1754 (Murrell, 1935, p. 307). Political expression in the form of graphics has been part of American journalism's coverage of politics and campaigns since that time.

In general, editorial cartoons are intended as a form of political persuasion and social protest. They inform by crystallizing current events and drawing readers into the paper (Harrison, 1981, 75, 79). Political cartoonists play the role of political commentators by interpreting the world around them (Long, 1962, 57). Cartoons and written editorials serve similar purposes, providing points of view to make people think about important issues. Cartoonists use graphic symbols as a sort of "shorthand" to present ideas, making a point that might be difficult to express in writing (Deur, 1972, 5-11). Visual satire, irreverence, a nothing-is-sacred attitude (Economist, 1985, 94), along with exaggeration and ridicule (Murrell), are the tools of the trade for political cartoonists.

The manner in which these tools were used by two newspapers to depict the presidential candidates during the 1984 campaign in this country is the thrust of this research.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

To date only a modest amount of scholarly research has been done on editorial cartoons. Fewer than 200 editorial cartoonists work in this country so that may be a reason for this lack of research, one study speculates (Riffe, Sneed & Van Ommeren, 1985). In particular, little research has been done that considers whether political cartoons published during a political campaign correlate with the political stance of a newspaper.

Beyond that, though, this study intended to specifically examine just how particular graphic symbols are used to depict political candidates, and what these symbols mean and say about the candidates.

This research extended one part of a previous study on the role of the press in the formation of campaign agendas during the 1984 presidential election (Semetko et al., 1986). Political cartoons were part of the content analysis of two newspapers' campaign coverage, but classification into one of four categories (*deflating, reinforcing, mixed* and *adds information*) was all that was done with the cartoons.

In this current study the cartoons were analyzed using semiotic methods to attempt to determine the signs (anything that can be used to stand for something else) used and their meanings, and what is signified about the candidates. The results from this analysis were used to determine if the political cartoons published correlate with the political leaning of each newspaper and thus relate to the results from the content analysis of the news stories. If the cartoons published correlated with current campaign topics or themes, this would indicate a relationship of political cartoons to news and editorial content, particularly as they relate to campaign agendas. For instance, a spate of cartoons about the nominating conventions or the debates at the times these events were in the news, or certain issues such as Mondale's pledge to raise taxes, would indicate a correlation between cartoons and agendas.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research asked what configurations of signs are used to depict the presidential candidates, Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale, in specific 1984 political cartoons, and what is signified about the candidates by these signs.

The study asked whether the general political leaning of each of the two newspapers in the study can be determined from an analysis of the cartoons, and if so, whether this matches the results from the content analysis of the news stories published during the campaign.

Finally, an effort was made to see if the themes and issues in political cartoons correlated with those in the news columns and editorials.

RELATED STUDIES

A knowledge of political cartoons and how they arose, their goals, aims and purposes, is necessary for one to understand the role cartoons play in the editorial process and how they function in playing that role.

Also necessary is an understanding of how meaning is derived from visuals, and how semiotic analysis is used to arrive at that meaning.

General periodical articles occasionally help put cartoons in perspective by describing cartoon roles or functions. Rhodes (1979) points out how editorial cartoons "convey a particular point of view," focusing on political persons and events. Ridicule, unflattering caricature and symbolism are the stock-in-trade of cartoonists. Heller (1982) believes cartooning can alter society's perceptions by needling, insulting, ridiculing and offending officials through satiric drawings that can destroy a statesman's image. Hill (1962) is himself a cartoonist and says American cartoons tend toward the use of symbols in creating pictorial satire. He considers caricature "the attempt to read inner characteristics into outward appearances" (p. 57).

Hess (1989) refers to editorial cartooning as an "opinion making medium," and says, "Politicians were always fair game" (p. 118). He also considers editorial cartoonists to be opinion makers (p. 123).

A history of Thomas Nast, considered the father of American political cartooning, refers to the themes, symbols and caricatures in cartoons, which are pictures representing ideas and events (Keller, 1968). Cartoonists are considered social commentators, using symbolism and distortion to present a picture that "is more true to life than reality itself" (p. 3).

A leading cartoonist of today, Bill Mauldin, is quoted in another history of Nast, saying that political cartoons are most effective "in attacking rather than defending" (St. Hill, 1974, p. 2), and Nast was considered effective because there was much to be against in his day.

Several histories of political cartooning in this country help show how the relationship between politicians and this particular branch of journalism has developed over time. Hess and Kaplan (1975) provide a good overview, and point out that political cartooning is a symbolic art that uses symbols as a shorthand. This shorthand serves both artist and viewers. Press (1981) adds to this with the inclusion of a chapter on the birth and development of political cartoon symbols. Nevins and Wietenkampf (1944) assert that political cartoons have documented the political history and much of the social history of this country.

Collections of cartoons by individual cartoonists can provide insight. A collection of Sanders cartoons (1974) considers political cartooning to be the art of legitimate exaggeration, and cartoonists those who must penetrate to the heart of an event. In Hill's Political Asylum collection (1985), cartoons are said to be critical journalistic rejoinders, "a means to keep people thinking about issues and their leaders."

Analyses of political cartoons from the standpoint of drawing techniques are provided by Hoff (1973) and Nelson (1978 and 1984). Hoff considers symbols the stock in trade for political cartoonists, and contends cartoons are an "effective weapon of propaganda." Nelson emphasizes that cartoons offer an analogy rather than depicting an event literally, that the fantasy settings stand for what is real.

Riffe, Sneed and Van Ommeren found that editors and cartoonists hold similar views on the role of cartoonists as social and political critics and that this role "is consistent with the mission of the editorial page itself."

How successfully that role is achieved may depend somewhat on the format of cartoons, Bivins (1984) found. His study indicates that cartoons derive their power from simple visual imagery, and that single-panel cartoons may be more effective than multiple-panel cartoons, in which a more complex gag may overwhelm the intended message.

But readers may not understand the message in political cartoons no matter how they are formatted, Carl (1968) found. His study showed that messages in cartoons are frequently interpreted incorrectly.

Running political cartoons along with editorials may help, however. Brinkman's research (1968) indicates that the right combination of cartoon and editorial can bring about opinion change.

Semiotic studies indicate that decoding visuals can depend on a reader's "knowledge," that is, the signs one has learned (Barthes, 1977, p. 28). Like Barthes, Berger (1984, p. 10) says readers or viewers must learn what signs mean, that we have to be taught signs.

Berger (1989, p. 120) adds to this conclusion by pointing out that cartoons often rely heavily on information known to readers, and thus function by striking a responsive chord. Similarly, Fiske (1982, p. 52) considers cartoons as "messages which attempt to convey a wealth of information by simple, direct means." Images perceived in political cartoons refer to mental concepts that we decode. Fresnault-Deruelle (forthcoming) also refers to "an imagery reducible to the code" in his study of comic strips, in which he used a semiotic approach to analyzing visuals.

Morris (1988) used an elaborate scheme of semiotic analysis in his study of Canadian political cartoons and, adding Marxist theory, concluded that cartoonists serve the bourgeois capitalist newspaper owners in an ideological struggle. Morris essentially summarized each cartoon in a sentence which organized and brought together all the contrasts and associations shown in the cartoon. He acknowledged the sentence might be clumsy in construction because of containing so many contrasts, and because the process of translating cartoons into words is by nature clumsy. However, he did think the technique served as a primitive tool for delineating the semiotic contents of cartoons, and for making comparisons between sets of cartoons. A complex chart was then constructed for each cartoon, setting out the series or layers of contrasts inherent in each cartoon. This chart, or hypogram, grouped depictions of a character into appearance and position, character traits, role, and relations with others. One cartoon showed French President Charles De Gaulle dressed as one of the Three Musketeers. Morris considered this as a sign that De Gaulle was the modern representative of the French tradition of legendary gallantry and heroism.

Hill (1978) used a less complicated semiotic approach to decode cartoons of Jimmy Carter in the 1976 presidential campaign. Here the cartoons were interpreted by a sophisticated appraisal of the nuances the artist included in the cartoon. The emphasis in this study was to identify the shorthand symbols, the encoded signs, used as equivalents of Carter's likeness. Hill described the scene or situation depicted in selected cartoons, and pointed out the sign or signs used to represent Carter. In most cases, Carter's big, toothy smile was the sign used by the cartoonist to stand for or represent the candidate. Then Hill categorized the coding systems evident in the cartoons into either mimetic (literal) or analogic (metaphorical). A mimetic representation, even though exaggerated, satirized or distorted, is based upon the facial features of the subject, and the face is recognizable by the readers. An analogic depiction transforms the subject into some sort of guise, such as showing Carter as a peanut, though a peanut with a toothy grin.

PROCEDURES AND METHODS

In a 1986 study, "The Role of the Press in the Formation of Campaign Agendas in Britain and the United States," by Weaver et al., part of the research was a content analysis of two newspapers in this country. The 1984 U.S. presidential election coverage in The Indianapolis Star of Indianapolis, Indiana, and The Courier-Journal of Louisville, Kentucky, was studied. The Star is considered a rather conservative newspaper and the Courier-Journal is considered rather liberal.

Political cartoons published in the Star and the Courier-Journal during the campaign were part of the content analyzed in the 1986 research. These cartoons were classified into four categories: *deflating, reinforcing, mixed,* and *adds information*, depending on how they treated the subject. No other analysis of them was made then.

These political cartoons from the Semetko et al. study form the units of analysis for the current research. The original cartoons from the 1986 study were available for examination in the files of the Bureau of Media Research at the Indiana University School of Journalism.

The cartoons published in the two newspapers between July and the November election were first sorted. All cartoons relating to the candidates, the parties or a campaign issue were retained for further analysis. Forty-two cartoons were eliminated from the study because of being unrelated to any of the above criteria, leaving 138 cartoons for analysis. Some cartoons were published that showed Reagan as president but not in a situation that was considered by the coders to be related to the campaign or a campaign issue, so these were among the 42 eliminated.

These 138 cartoons were then categorized according to whether they were *deflating* or *reinforcing* of the candidates or parties, or whether the cartoons fell into the *mixed* or *adds information* categories. These were the categories of the original 1986 study and were retained for this portion of the current research. Cartoons did not necessarily have to depict a candidate to be considered deflating or reinforcing. Even without showing a candidate, the situation present could still reflect negatively or positively on a candidate or the party he represented, and this was considered to be deflating or reinforcing of the candidate himself. Three coders were used for this analysis. The percentage of agreement on the *deflating/reinforcing* categories among the coders was 92.8 percent, using Holsti's Intercoder Reliability Formula.

This study intended to clarify the similarities in imagery and themes. The depiction and manipulation of the politicians and the resultant effects and meanings were analyzed and categorized. Particularly important was physiognomy, the classification of people into character types according to outward bodily signs. (As mentioned, the physiognomic characterization of President Jimmy Carter rapidly became, for most cartoonists, his big, toothy smile.) The essential message in a cartoon is supplied by the physiognomy or facial features of the subject, Hill believes.

The method of interpreting the cartoons was a critical appraisal of the nuances used by the cartoonists in depicting the candidates, as Hill used in her 1978 study of the 1976 presidential campaign. This is a semiotic approach, which studies the signs in the cartoons and the relationships between signs which generate meaning. A sign refers to or stands for something else. An icon is a sign that bears a resemblance to its object (that for which it stands). An icon can be literal, as in a photograph, or it can be distorted or exaggerated, as is often the case with political cartoons. But an icon still bears enough resemblance to its object to be recognizable. An index is a sign with a direct existential connection with its object. Smoke, for instance, is an index of fire. A symbol is a sign whose connection with its object is a matter of rule, agreement or convention. Letters and words generally are considered symbols, for example.

Repeated use of the same signs to characterize the candidates was noted, and classification of cartoons into literal (mimetic) depictions or metaphorical (analogic) depictions was made.

A literal depiction was considered to be one which showed the subject's face in a recognizable form, even though it might be greatly distorted or exaggerated, and showed the subject in a reasonably likely situation. For example, many literal situations show the candidates at podiums or pointing to something on a wall chart.

A metaphorical cartoon was considered to be one which showed a recognizable face but which showed the candidate in a highly unlikely situation or transformed the subject's body into something in the realm of fantasy or myth. Hill used the example of Jimmy Carter with the body of a peanut as an example of a metaphorical cartoon. Three coders were also used for this analysis. The percentage of agreement on the division into literal or metaphorical categories was 90.8 percent, using Holsti's Intercoder Reliability Formula.

In addition to identifying the signs used in these cartoons, the results of this visual analysis were used to determine if either candidate was shown consistently in a more favorable manner or a less favorable manner by either newspaper. This indicated whether the depiction of the conservative candidate agreed with the political leaning of the conservative newspaper, and whether the depiction of the liberal candidate agreed with the political leaning of the liberal newspaper, or if there was no correlation at all.

FINDINGS

Cartoonists overwhelmingly settle on an icon as a sign to represent a political candidate, and this seems to be universally agreed upon by every cartoonist to stand for that individual. It is usually something simple that can be created by as few pen strokes as possible and still be readily recognizable by the reading public. This icon may grossly distort, exaggerate or ridicule the politician, but it is still something by which the subject can be recognized. The verbal or graphic message of a cartoon may be complicated or even easily misinterpreted, but the choice of icon, almost always a physiognomic feature, to represent a subject is seldom read incorrectly. The result is a code of facial features that stand for a politician, and this code is shared by cartoonists and viewers, Hess and Kaplan say (p. 33). The role of the public in sharing this code is important. Without the public agreeing on this code, the point of the cartoon would be lost because the viewers are affected most powerfully by faces they recognize (Hill, A., p. 326).

When Reagan emerged as a presidential candidate in 1979, his most striking characteristic was wrinkles, in particular deep furrows under his chin. But cartoonists discovered such detail was reproducing poorly so the focus shifted to his hair. His trademark became his high, wavy pompadour. By the 1980 presidential campaign, Reagan was almost always depicted by this exaggerated hairline (*Newsweek*, 1980, p. 78). In this study of the 1984 campaign, every representation of Reagan but one characterized him by this high-flying hairstyle (see Figure 1). The one exception showed him wearing a cowboy hat which covered the hair (see Figure 2).

Mondale also was shown with a characteristic trademark during the 1984 campaign. He was almost always depicted with heavy-lidded eyes, bags under the eyes, and a prominent, high-bridged Roman nose (see Figure 3). Only one cartoon did not give him such eyes, and that one showed him from the back.

Sixteen cartoonists were represented in this study, and every one of them used these icons to depict the candidates.

Nothing was noted in the cartoons that was considered an index, but two cartoons used a symbol to label a character as Mondale. These two depicted Mondale as a mouse with boxing gloves on about to do battle with the elephants of the Republican party. In each case there was a letter M on the mouse's boxing trunks. One of the mice was even heavy-lidded (see Figure 4), and the other was the one showing him from the back (see Figure 5).

Other symbols occasionally were used in the cartoons, such as the Republican elephant or the Democratic donkey. And some cartoons combined an iconic representation of the candidate with some sort of symbol such as the elephant. Figure 6 includes Reagan dressed as the symbol Uncle Sam, plus the symbols of the flag and Bible. Even here, though, the icon of the exaggerated pompadour is still present.

Cartoonists seem to like using a metaphorical situation or depiction of the candidate about as well as a literal depiction or situation. The cartoons in this study were almost exactly evenly divided between the two forms of code, with less than one percentage point separating the two categories.

Figure 1 shows Reagan as a fighter pilot, a metaphorical situation. Figure 2, showing Reagan as a cowboy, may be a metaphor for his line about America standing tall in the saddle. Figure 7 is a metaphor of the wacko cowboy bomber pilot in the movie Dr. Strangelove. Figure 8 is another metaphorical situation, with the two candidates as the Biblical figures of David and Goliath. This was published after the first debate, in which Mondale was considered the winner.

Figure 9 is a type of metaphor that depicts a transformation of the subject into another guise. Here Reagan is shown as a programmed robot going haywire. This was published after the first debate when Reagan didn't do well, possibly because he wasn't well prepared (programmed).

A more extreme transformation is shown in Figure 10, where the candidates are shown as song birds, each singing his own song about taxes. Even here, though, the same icons of the eyes and nose for Mondale and the hair for Reagan are retained.

A metaphor of a fairy tale is used in Figure 11, with Mondale as a frog and the National Organization for Women as the fairy princess whose kiss will make the frog a prince, or in this case, a president. The iconic eyes and nose are still present.

One of the most extreme metaphorical transformations is shown in Figure 12. The face of the beef has the iconic Mondale eyes and nose, while the body, showing how Mondale tried to appeal to numerous constituencies, is reminiscent of a butcher's chart showing the cuts that can be obtained from a side.

Political cartoons are noted for satire, so it is not surprising that most cartoons depicting the candidates were considered to be deflating of the candidate's image. Overwhelmingly, what is signified about the candidates in the cartoons is unfavorable. The average for the two candidates was 93.9 percent deflating.

Certain themes or topics relating to news agendas appeared as cartoons several times during the campaign. Tax plans, with Reagan pledging no tax increase and Mondale saying a tax increase was necessary, resulted in 12 cartoons. The choice of Geraldine Ferraro as Mondale's running mate produced 11 cartoons, closely followed with 10 cartoons about the debates. Ferraro's finances resulted in six cartoons and Reagan's gaffe about dropping bombs on Russia, when he didn't know broadcasting had started during a radio show, produced four cartoons. The conventions also resulted in four cartoons. While not every topic resulted in a large number of cartoons, enough showed up that each theme was noticeable when examining the cartoons sequentially. There cannot be an exact one-to-one correlation between the appearance of an item in the news columns and the appearance of a cartoon on that topic because of the mail delay in distributing syndicated cartoons. However, within a week or so of the news event, several cartoons on that topic from various artists might show up. This study did not detect any evidence that cartoons set the agenda; rather, it seems that cartoons react to the news columns.

The number of depictions in the cartoons of Reagan or the Republicans was 88, and the number of depictions of Mondale or the Democrats was 65. The total is more than the total of cartoons examined but this is because a number of cartoons showed both candidates. Sometimes such a cartoon would be deflating to both candidates, but in several instances a cartoon would deflate the image of one candidate and reinforce the image of the other. Figure 2, for example, reinforces Reagan and deflates Mondale. The situation is reversed in Figure 8.

When the deflating depiction of each candidate in each newspaper is examined, a pattern begins to emerge. The Indianapolis Star published during the campaign 31 deflating images of Reagan and 47 deflating images of Mondale. In percentages, 39.7 percent of the Star's deflating cartoons that actually depicted a candidate were deflating of Reagan, and 60.3 percent were deflating of Mondale. This is approximately a 3-2 ratio. During the same period, the Louisville Courier-Journal published 42 cartoons deflating Reagan and 15 cartoons deflating Mondale. Or, 73.7 of the Journal's cartoons that actually depicted a candidate deflated Reagan and 26.3 percent deflated Mondale. This is approximately a 3-1 ratio. These findings are summarized in Table 1.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the cartoons in this study shows that signs are used by cartoonists to represent subjects in a form of graphic shorthand or stereotyping of politicians. Icons, or somewhat literal representations, of the subjects are commonly used signs. Symbols, which stand for something by convention, are also often used signs. These findings correspond to the findings in the Morris and Hill studies.

The use of metaphors by cartoonists to depict a subject or situation is quite common in this study, and this agrees with what Hill found. This finding also relates to Nelson's view that cartoons offer an analogy, that fantasy settings stand for what is real.

It is no surprise that this study found the depictions of politicians and their parties overwhelmingly deflating. This corresponds to the views in various articles and books that point out how the use of ridicule and unflattering satire is the norm for political cartoonists.

Political cartoons that matched topics and themes in the news columns of the newspapers show that cartoons play mainly a reinforcing role rather than a leading one in the formation of campaign agendas in the press. This relates directly to the findings of Weaver et al. in their study of the relationship of government and the media during political campaigns.

The results of this study show that a conservative newspaper published quite a few more cartoons deflating Mondale than Reagan, and that a liberal newspaper published a lot more cartoons deflating Reagan than Mondale. From this it can be concluded that the political leaning of each newspaper is reflected in the use made of political cartoons on the editorial page. Most political cartoons, of course, are unflattering. But many choices of syndicated cartoons are available to newspapers, so it appears that the choice of which candidate to show in an unfavorable light most often is directly related to the newspaper's political stance. Again, this relates directly to the Weaver et al. findings about the role of the press in the formation of campaign agendas. Political cartoons play an integral role in the editorial page and news column campaign agendas by tending to reinforce these agendas of issues and themes.

Figure 1

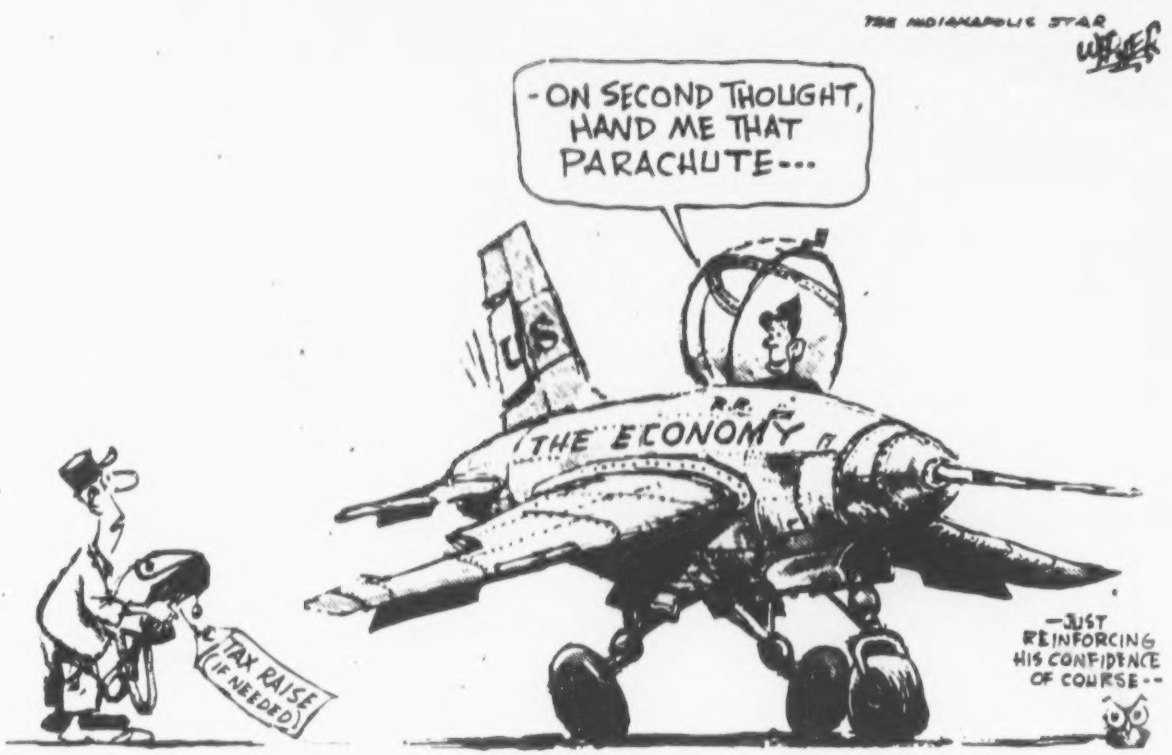
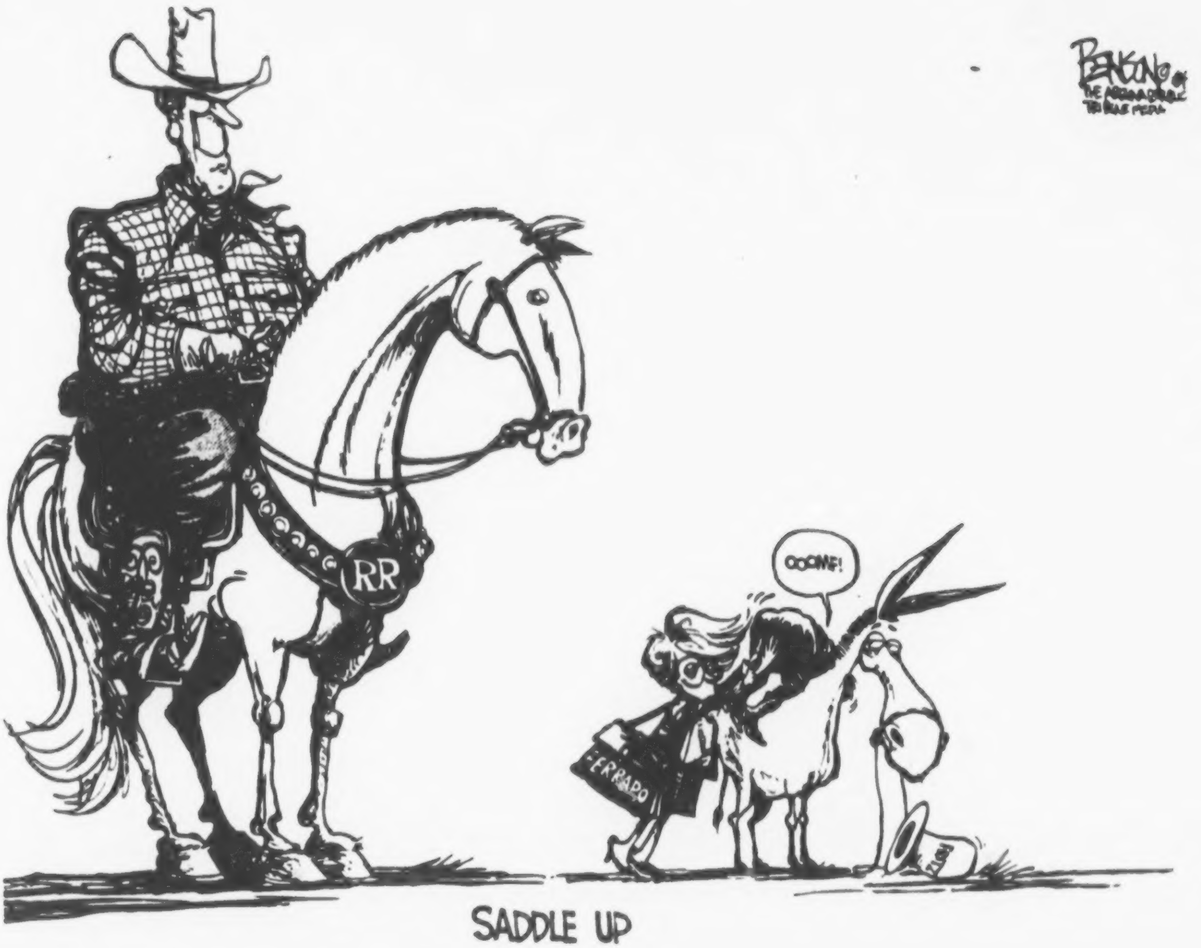

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR
- ON SECOND THOUGHT, HAND ME THAT PARACHUTE---
US
R.R.
THE ECONOMY
TAX RAISE (IF NEEDED)
-JUST REINFORCING HIS CONFIDENCE OF COURSE--

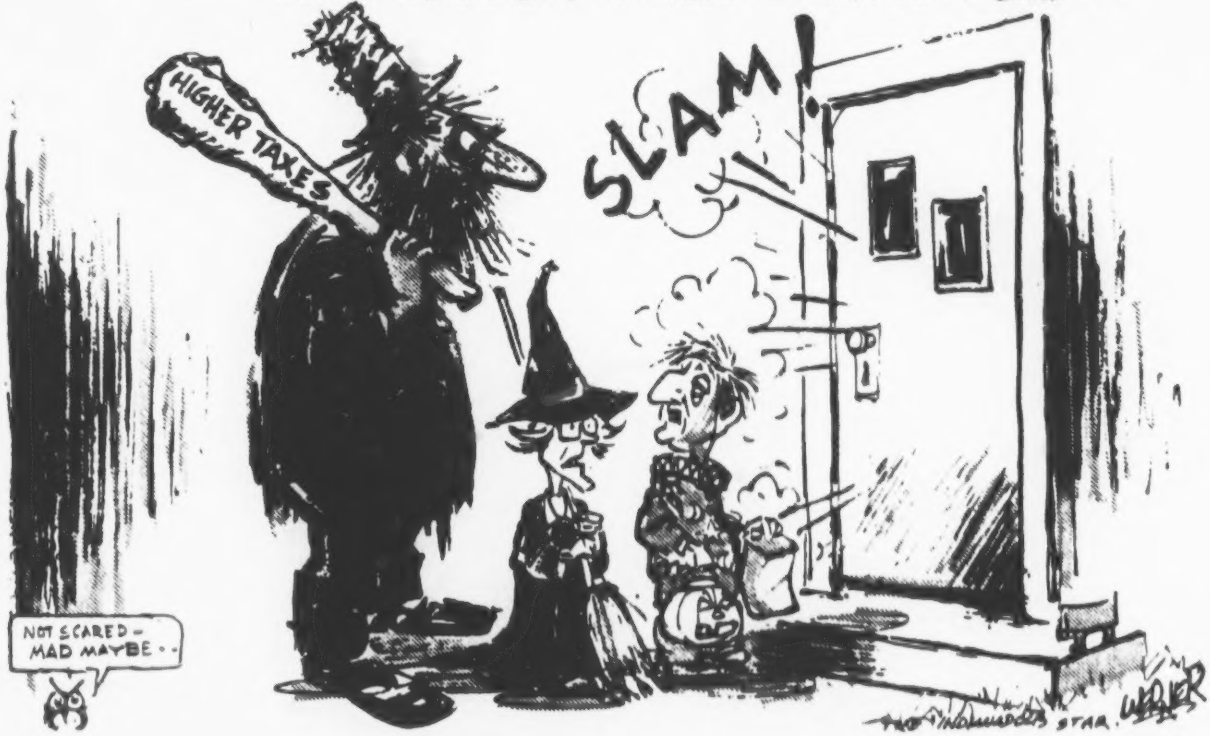
Figure 2


BENSON
RR
OOOMF!
FERRARO

SADDLE UP

Figure 3

'MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT US THEY DON'T LIKE...'



HIGHER TAXES
SLAM!
NOT SCARED - MAD MAYBE..
THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR. WERNER

Figure 4

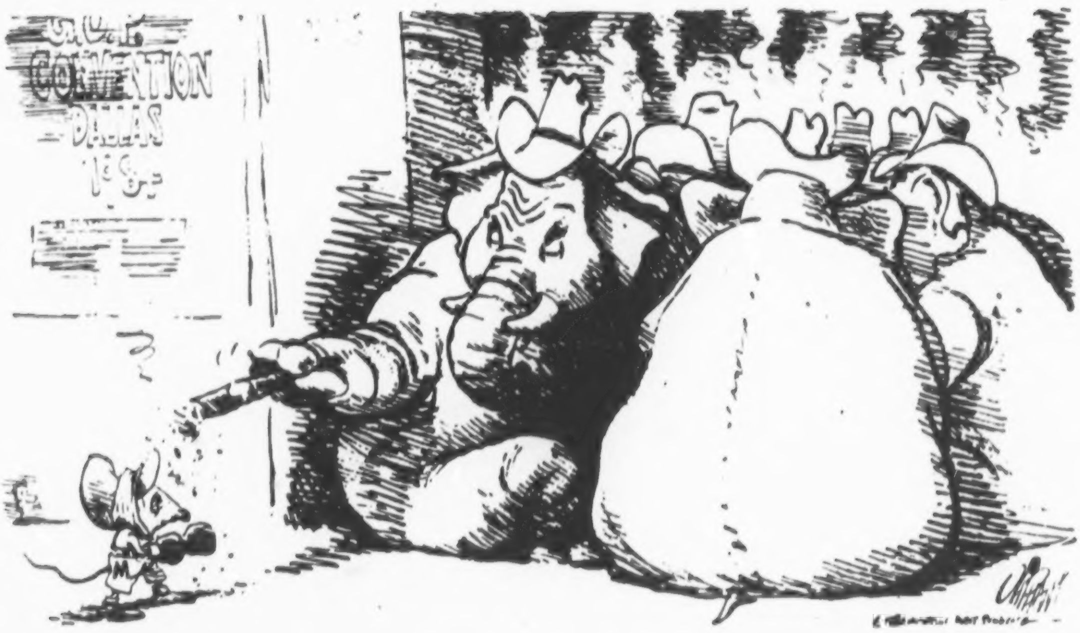

G.O.P.
CONVENTION
DALLAS
M

Figure 5

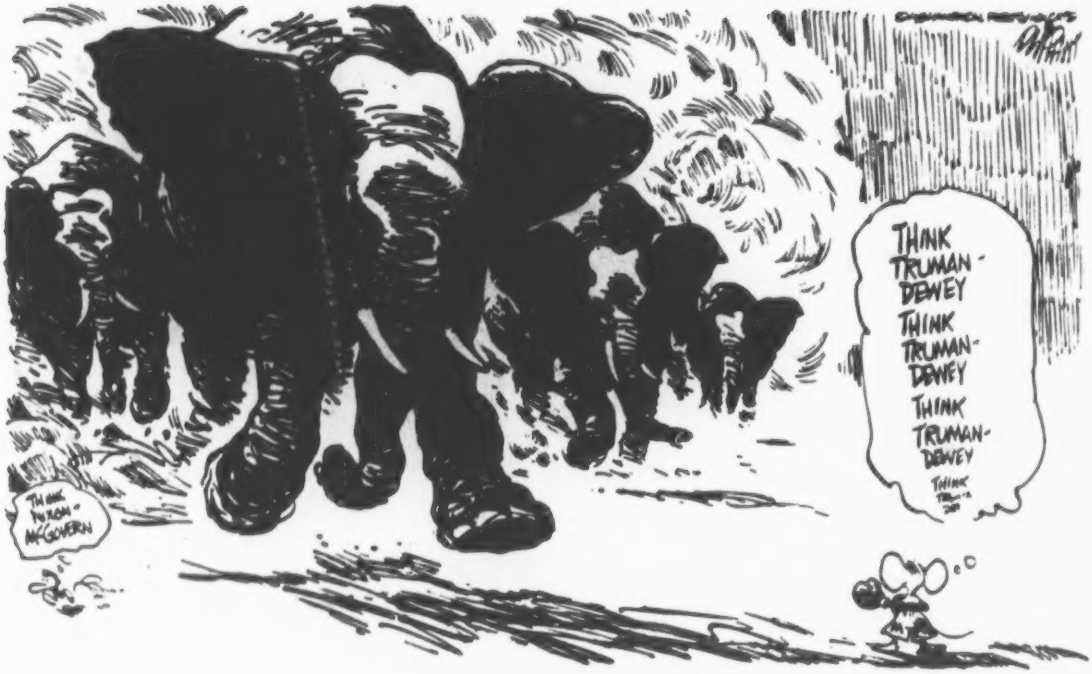

THINK NIXON-McGOVERN
THINK TRUMAN-DEWEY THINK TRUMAN-DEWEY THINK TRUMAN-DEWEY THINK

Figure 6

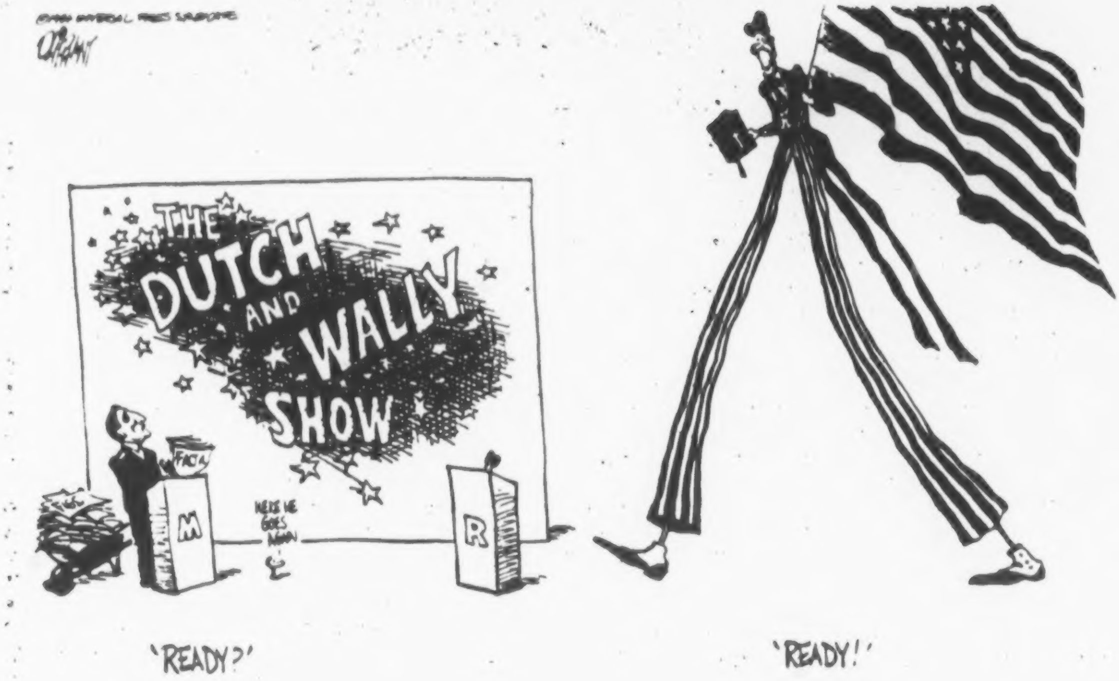

THE DUTCH AND WALLY SHOW
FACTS
M
HERE HE GOES AGAIN
R
'READY?'
'READY!'

Figure 7

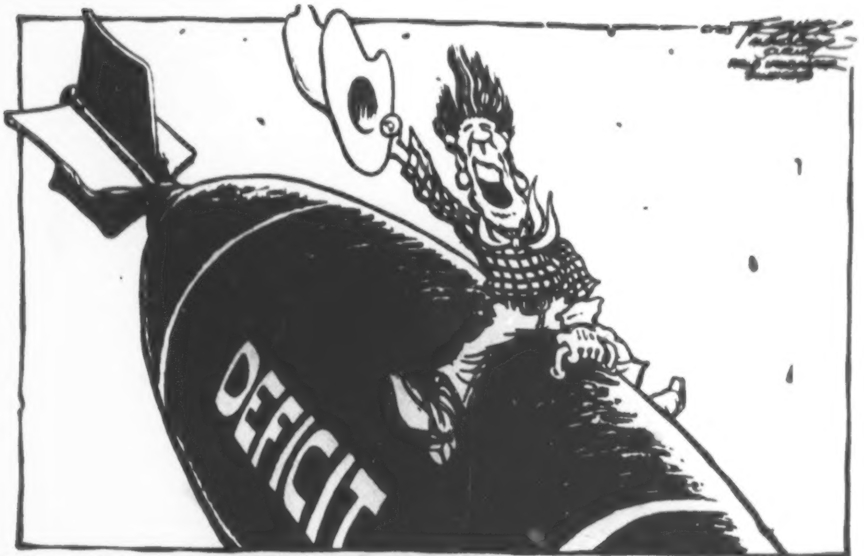

DEFICIT
DR. STRANGEBUDGET— OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB

Figure 8

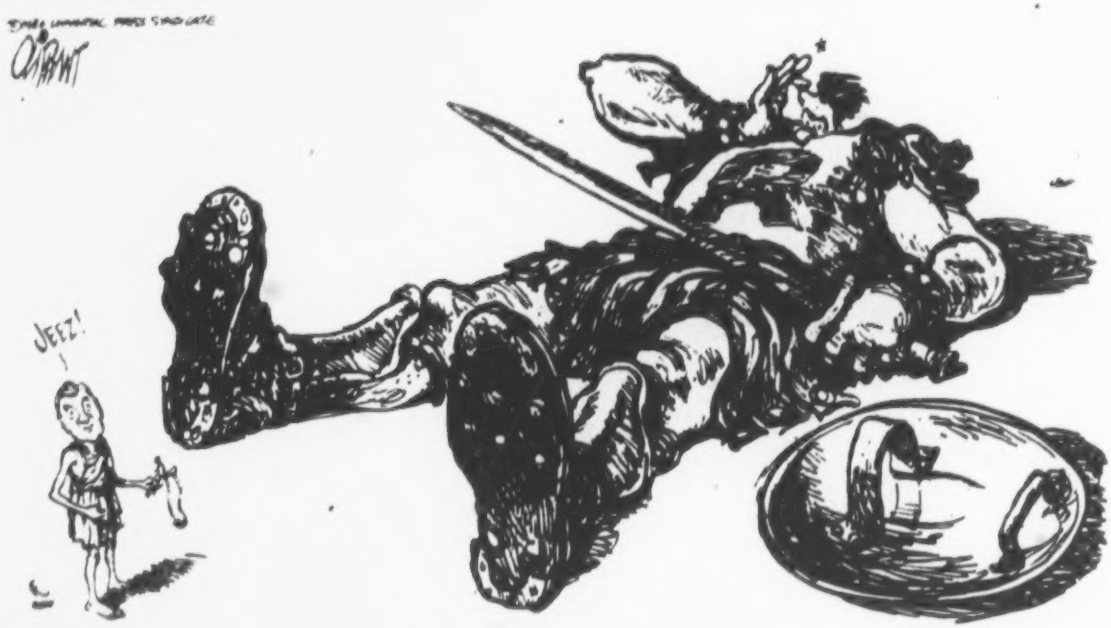

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE
OLIPHANT
JEEZ!

Figure 9

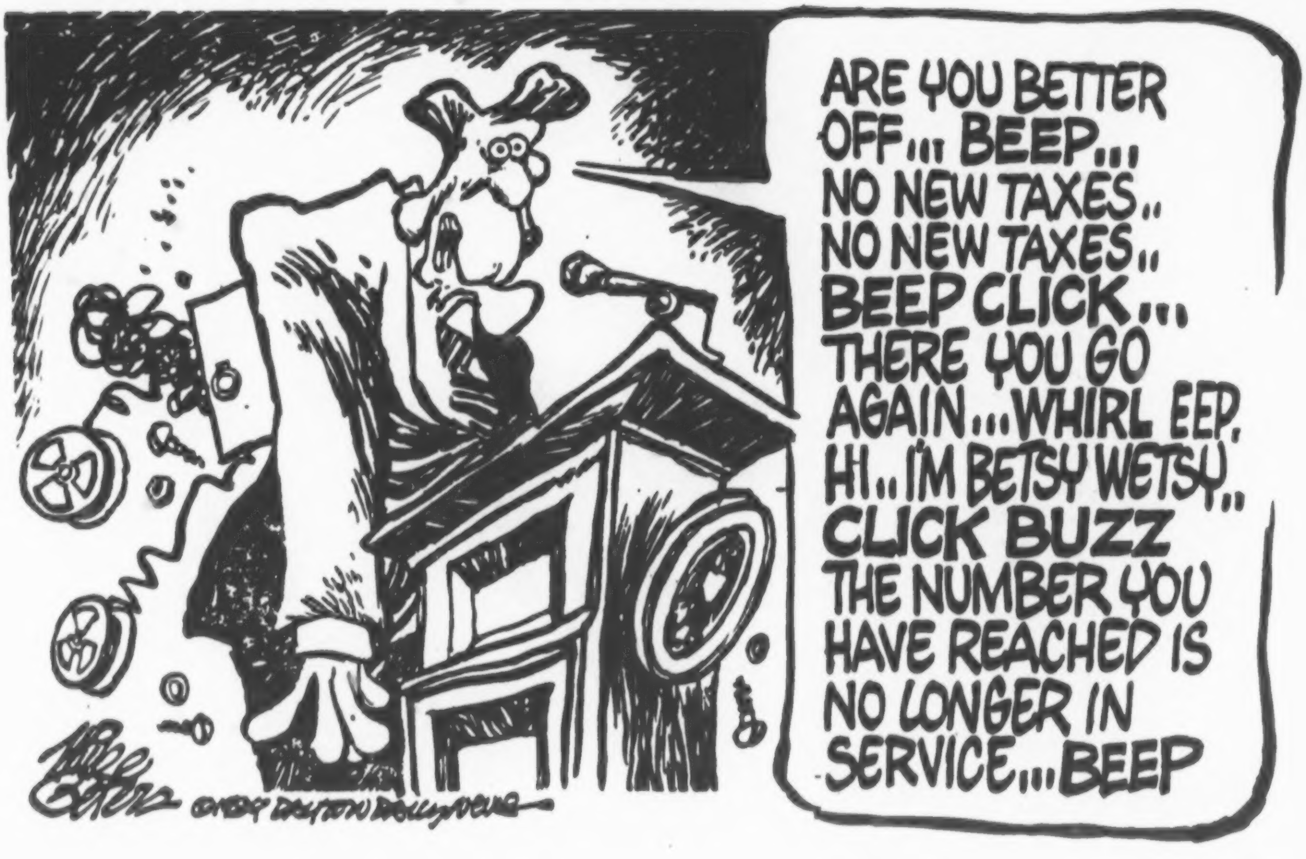

ARE YOU BETTER OFF... BEEP... NO NEW TAXES.. NO NEW TAXES.. BEEP CLICK... THERE YOU GO AGAIN... WHIRL EEP. HI.. I'M BETSY WETSY.. CLICK BUZZ THE NUMBER YOU HAVE REACHED IS NO LONGER IN SERVICE... BEEP
Mike Peters
©1988 Dayton Daily News

Figure 10

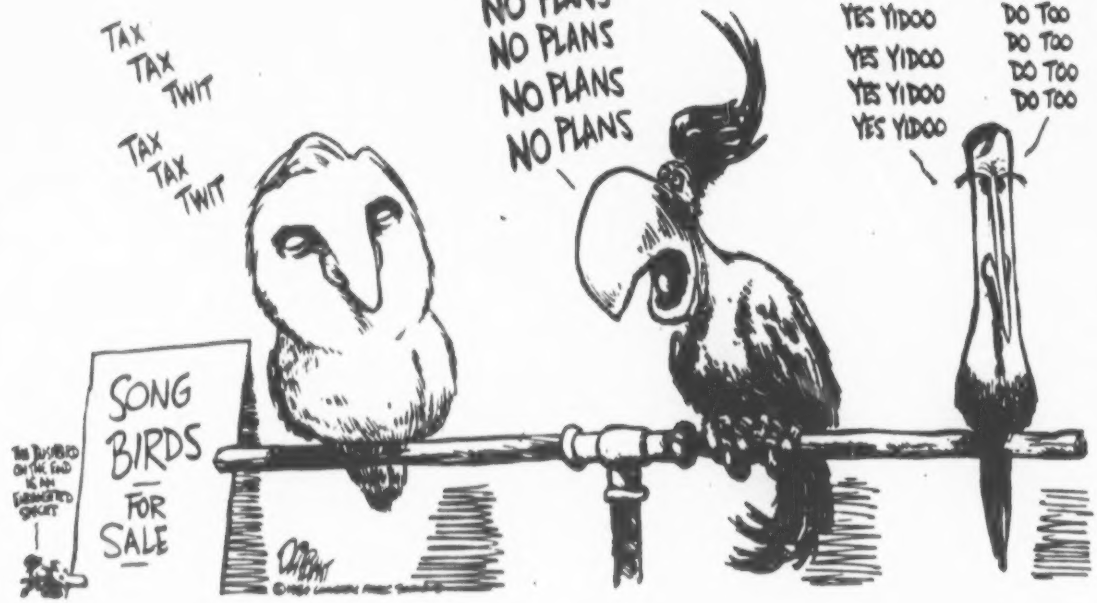
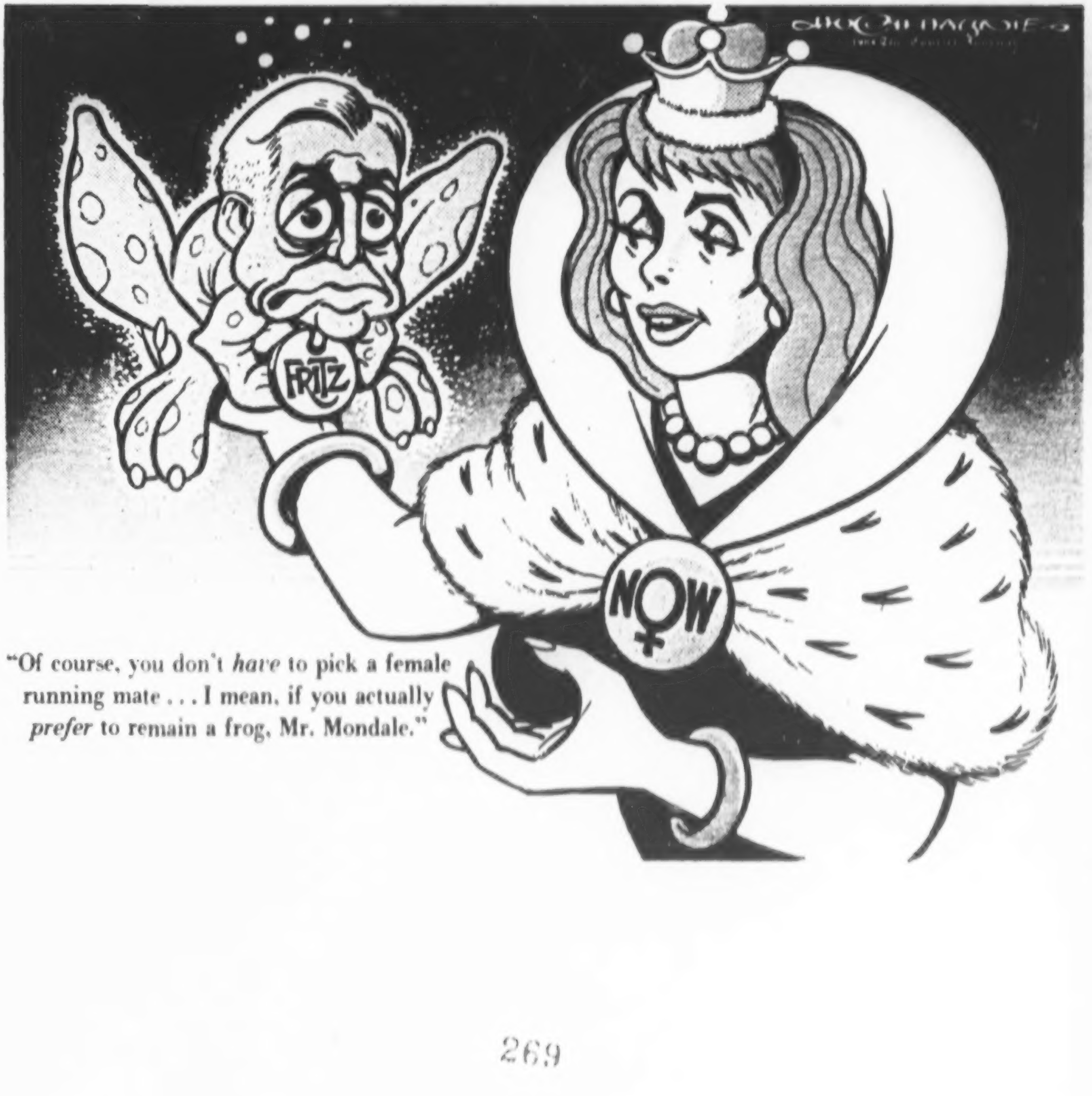
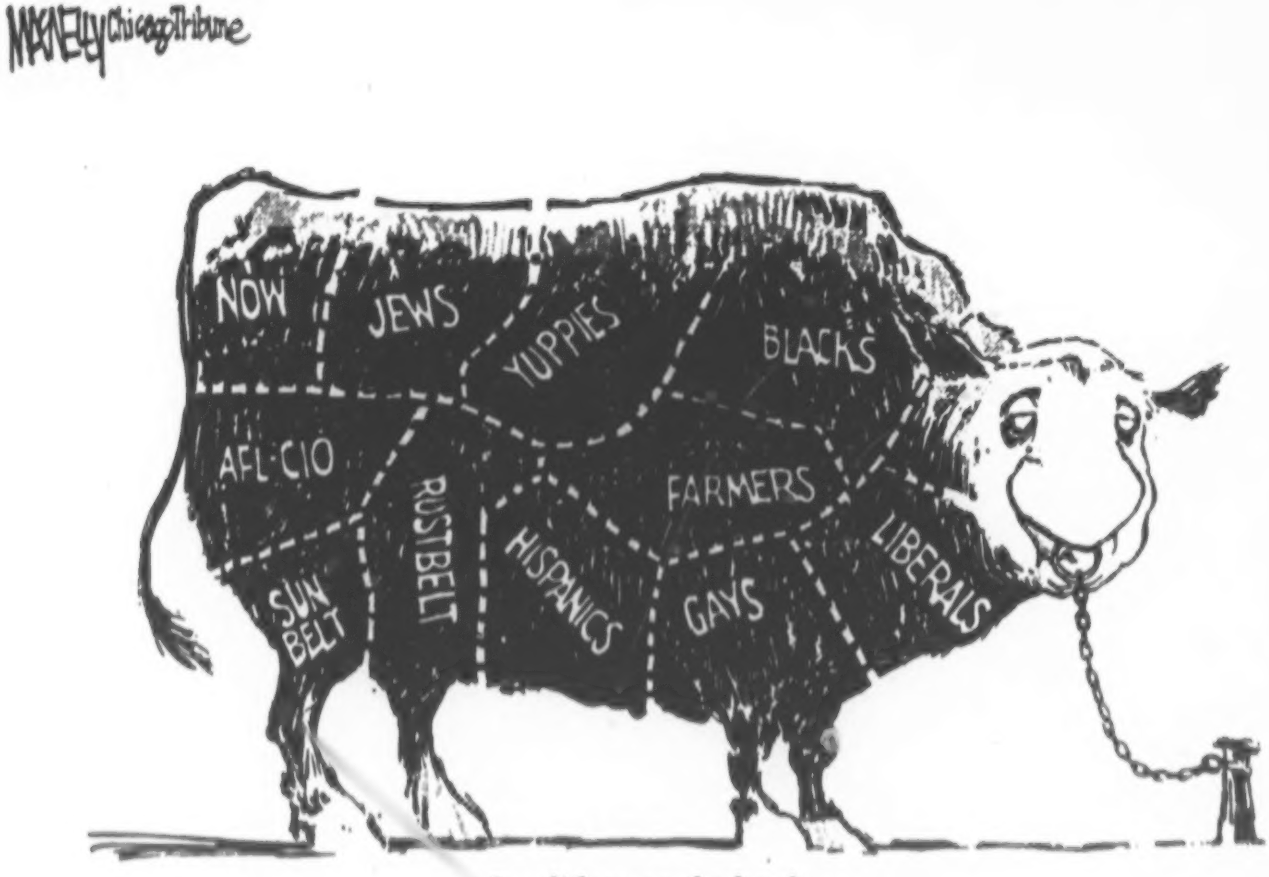

TAX TAX TWIT
TAX TAX TWIT
NO PLANS NO PLANS NO PLANS NO PLANS
YES YIDOO YES YIDOO YES YIDOO YES YIDOO
DO TOO DO TOO DO TOO DO TOO
SONG BIRDS FOR SALE
THE BUSHBIRD ON THE END IS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

Figure 11


HUGH HAYNIE
FRITZ
NOW

"Of course, you don't *have* to pick a female running mate . . . I mean, if you actually *prefer* to remain a frog, Mr. Mondale."

Figure 12


MacNELLY Chicago Tribune
NOW
JEWS
YUPPIES
BLACKS
AFL-CIO
RUSTBELT
FARMERS
HISPANICS
LIBERALS
SUN BELT
GAYS

Candidate on-the-hoof

Table 1: Deflating Cartoons

	Indianapolis Star	Louisville Courier-Journal
Reagan	31 (39.7%)	42 (73.7%)
Mondale	47 (60.3%)	15 (26.3%)
Totals	78 (100 %)	57 (100 %)

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Need For Cognition and
Self-Report of Persuasive Message Attributes:

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ABSTRACT: This research reports two studies investigating the relationship between people's self-reports of what persuades them and the personality attribute Need for Cognition. (NFC) In the first study, responses to an open-ended question on what makes messages persuasive were content analyzed. In the second study, respondents endorsed persuasive attributes on closed response items derived from the open-ended questions from Study 1. The five categories of persuasive cues derived from the content analysis of the open-ended questions were confirmed by factor analysis of the closed response items. In both studies, persuasive attributes reported by respondents were related to NFC in a manner congruent with the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion. High NFC was associated positively with reports that logic, information, and personal relevance were important to persuasion. Low NFC tended to be negatively associated with reports that source attributes and attention cues were important.

Presented to the Communication Theory and Methodology Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis, MN, August 1990.

This study examines whether people know what attributes of messages persuade them. Using propositions derived from the Elaboration Likelihood Model, we related respondents' self reports of what persuades them to their motivations to think.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) posits two routes to persuasion – central and peripheral. The central route requires refining of information in a manner such that persuasive arguments are weighed, and judged "using thoughtful consideration of the information at hand." Thinking that is relevant to the issues at hand is defined as using the central route. Under central route processing, individuals are likely to weigh or judge message arguments thoughtfully when considering the merits of the message. Under peripheral route processing they are likely to focus on more superficial cues such as structural characteristics, rewards associated with an advocated position, sender characteristics, and non-content message characteristics. The peripheral route takes place when decisions are made in the absence of issue-relevant thinking.

To the degree that individuals possess the ability or the motivation, they are likely to process messages via the central route. When either motivation or ability are lacking, the peripheral route is likely to dominate.

The personality attribute Need for Cognition is one of the variables found to be associated with routes to persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Conceptually, NFC is a relatively enduring propensity to think analytically. If NFC is conceived as a measure of individuals' motivation for thinking, then people high in NFC should use the central route to evaluate messages and people low in NFC should use the peripheral route to evaluate messages.

A number of studies have indicated that individuals high in NFC are persuaded by central cues (e.g message quality) while individuals low in NFC tend to be persuaded by peripheral cues (e.g. number of arguments irrespective of quality (Cacioppo, Petty, and Morris, 1983; Cacioppo and Petty, 1984; Haugtvedt, Petty and Cacioppo, 1986)).

Much of the previous research has relied on experimental method and manipulation of message cues to tease out the relationships between motivations to engage in central route processing and message characteristics. Generally, prior research gathered samples of messages and asked subjects to evaluate them. Researchers relied upon the evaluations provided by respondents without making an effort to understand what attributes made the messages persuasive. Our research is an effort to rectify this.

Need for cognition should act in systematic ways with people's self reports of what persuades them. If people can indeed report the things that make messages persuasive, persons high in NFC should report attributes relating to the message quality and persons low in NFC should report attributes outside the quality of the message.

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to test the proposition that people are aware of what makes messages persuasive and can report them. The open-ended responses were coded and then analyzed for differences according to levels of NFC.

Method

Questionnaires were administered to introductory communication students, 97 from a major Southeastern university and 76 from a major Midwestern university, to elicit their views concerning what makes messages persuasive and to ascertain their levels of NFC. Students' perception of message effectiveness was elicited by asking them to write answers to the following open-ended question:

> As a college student you often encounter messages that attempt to make you change your mind about something. Some of these messages are effective; some are not. What is it about a message that makes it effective to you? In the space below, please list four of five things that you think make messages effective.

Responses to our open-ended question were entered verbatim into a computer file for content analysis using Miller's (1988) VBPro content analysis program.

The program allows for the analysis of verbatim answers by sentence, by paragraph and by individual words as they appear in context. Content categories were developed by inspection of the key words in context. Commonly occurring words and phrases were grouped on two bases: One, on their tendency to co-occur and Two, researchers intuition of their synonymous meanings.

The categories were:

1. **Logical Cues:** Logic, Logical, Logically, Rational, Reasoned, Good Arguments, Makes Sense, Think, Thought.

2. **Information Cues:** Fact, Facts, Information, Proof, Proves, Evidence, Data, Statistics, Surveys.

3. **Source Cues:** Person, Source, People, Sender, Endorser, Spokesman, Salesman, Credible, Sincere, Honest, Believable, Respected, Reliable, Well Liked, Knows What He's Talking About.

4. **Personal Relevance Cues:** Desire, Need, Goal, Incentive, Solution, Want, Pertains To Me, Specific Answer To The Issue, Applied To My Situation, Makes My Life Easier, I Am Interested, Answers An Issue.

5. **Attention Cues:** Catch, Catchy, Catches, Captures, Interesting, Entertaining, Presentation, Manner.

After the computer assigned cases to categories, answers were inspected visually to assure correct classification. For example, the phrase, "I think . . ." would not be indicative of a logical cue while the phrases, "makes me think" would be.

Levels of need for cognition were measured with the 18-item NFC Scale developed and validated by Cacioppo and Petty (1984). The scale has displayed impressive psychometric characteristics including a reported coefficient alpha of .90 for the 18-item version of the scale. In our study, factor analysis indicated that the nine-point Likert items were dominated by a single factor. The items summed to a reliable scale (alpha = .93). Standardized factor scores (mean = 0, variance = 1) were assigned to each individual.

Analysis and Results

A General Linear Model procedure was used to determine whether the presence or absence of cue categories mentioned by respondents were related to their levels of NFC. That is, a case was coded cue present if one or more of the category terms listed above occurred in his/her response, cue absent otherwise. These dichotomous codes were treated as the independent variable and the standardized NFC score was treated as the dependent variable. This ordering of variables does not presume causal direction; it merely tests for significant associations. Also, because respondents' use of cue categories were not mutually exclusive (individuals could mention terms in more than one category), Type III sums of squares were used in tests of statistical significance. The significance tests reported below are, therefore, estimates of the unique contribution of each category to the tested relationship.

There was a significant overall relationship between the cue categories and NFC: ($F=4.17$, $df=5$, $Pr>F=0.0013$, $R^2=.112$). This finding justifies a further analysis of the significance of the individual parameter estimates, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 About Here

Because the cue categories are dummy coded and the analysis is multivariate, the parameter estimates in the first column of Table 1 are indicative of the independent association of each cue category with NFC. Two cue categories are associated significantly with NFC. Individuals who mention logical cues are nearly one standard deviation above the sample mean, a finding of significance at the .001 level. Individuals who mention personal relevance cues are .43 standard deviations (corrected for the effects of other variables) above the sample mean, significant at the .05 level. No significant relationships were found between the remaining cues and NFC.

These findings appear to conform, in general, with Elaboration Likelihood theory and provided a motivation for the further investigation of the phenomenon as described below.

Study 2

Because of the dichotomous coding employed with the open-ended responses and the subjective nature of the coding procedures, Study 2 was conducted to provide more precise and objective measures. A 44-item scale was developed from respondents' responses in Study 1 to empirically test the validity of the open-ended methods.

Method

Questionnaires were administered to 196 introductory communication students from a major Midwestern university to elicit their reactions to statements concerning what makes persuasive messages effective and to ascertain their levels of NFC. No subjects participating in Study 2 had participated in Study 1. Subjects' perceptions of message effectiveness were elicited by asking them to respond to 44 nine-point Likert-type items that described possible attributes of effective persuasive messages. The 44 attributes were those elicited by the open-ended question of Study 1. Subjects read the following instructions:

> As a college student you often encounter messages that attempt to make you change your mind about something. Some of these messages are effective; some are not. What is it about messages that makes them effective to you? Following you will find 44 statements about what may or may not be attributes of effective messages. Please indicate the degree to which you either agree or disagree with each statement by marking the appropriate box.

Subjects then responded to the statements in Table 2.

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Table 2 About Here

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A random ordering of the statements was achieved by use of a table of random numbers. Because items designed to measure both use of central and peripheral cues were included, no negative phrasing was employed in the creation of the statements. In Study 1 responses to the open-ended questions were gathered before administration of the NFC scale; for this study the NFC scale was administered before responses to the 44 items were gathered.

Responses to our 44 items were factor analyzed using Principal Components Analysis with a Varimax rotation. Five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 emerged from this analysis. Other numbers of factors were forced and analyzed, but the five-factor solution was the more easily interpretable. The five factors were labeled: Logical Cues, Source Cues, Attention Cues, Information Cues, and Personal Relevance Cues. Items that had cross loadings or no discernable loading were eliminated, and the remaining items analyzed again. This process was repeated four times leaving 22 items, each with a unique loading on one of the five factors. The factors (along with the key words from each item loading on the factors) were identified as:

1. **Logical Cues:** Logical, Well Reasoned, Believable, Make Sense, Rational, Provide Evidence, Credible Message.

2. **Source Cues:** Good People, Well Liked, Respected, Good Person, Good Endorsers.

3. **Attention Cues:** Entertaining, Capture Attention, Interesting, Catch Attention.

4. **Information Cues:** Information, Data, Facts.

5. **Personal Relevance Cues:** Make Life Easier, Attain Things Desired, Reach Personal Goal.

Table 3 lists the individual items and their loadings on each of the five factors.

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Table 3 About Here

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Factor scores were generated from each of the five factors for each subject.

Levels of need for cognition were measured with Cacioppo and Petty's 18-item NFC Scale (1984). Alpha factor analysis indicated that the nine-point Likert items were dominated by a single factor. Since the items summed to a reliable scale (alpha = .97), the items were summed to create subjects' NFC scores.

Analysis and Results

A General Linear Model procedure was used to determine whether a relationship exists between subjects' proclivity for depending on the five dimensions identified in the factor analysis and their levels NFC. As an individual difference, NFC conceptually was the obvious independent variable for the analysis. In MANOVA, then, Type III sums of squares yielded significant multivariate results. This finding justified an examination of the univariate results. Table 4 indicates significant relationships between NFC and Logical Cues ($p<.0007$) and between NFC and Information Cues ($p<.0383$). A relationship tended toward statistical significance between NFC and Personal Relevance Cue ($p<.0597$). Relationships between NFC and Attention Cues or NFC and Source Cues were negative, as expected under ELM, but not statistically significant To interpret the significant univariate F statistics, ANCOVA procedures were used to generate cell mean estimates for subjects one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean NFC score. A subject one standard deviation above the mean NFC score would be .24 standard deviations above the mean of zero for the items loading on the Logical Cue factor and .14 standard deviations above the mean for the items loading on the Information Cue factor (higher scores indicate stronger agreement). Although the relationship between NFC and Personal Relevance did not reach traditional levels of statistical significance, the tendency was in the expected direction – a subject scoring one standard deviation above the mean NFC score was .13 standard deviation above the mean for the items loading on the Personal Relevance Cue factor.

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Table 4 About Here

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Discussion

The pattern of findings clearly indicates a relationship between what individuals report as characteristics of messages that persuade them and their levels of NFC. The pattern also is congruent with theoretical expectations derived from the Elaboration Likelihood Model articulated by Petty and Cacioppo (1986).

Assessing messages for their logical connections clearly requires analytic thought and is indicative of central route processing. Similarly, the use of personal relevance cues is indicative of a motivation for central route processing since determining whether an issue is personally relevant requires engaging in issue-relevant thinking, which is the ELM's definition of using the central route.

The other cue categories, although not statistically significant, are in the directions congruent with theory. That is, fact cues tend to be associated with higher levels of NFC and are central route message properties, while source and attention cues tend to be associated with lower levels of NFC and are peripheral route message properties.

It should be noted that other cue category schemes might have been devised for study 1. The effort reported here was to construct a system that would result in few categories with a relatively large number of cases in each and with relative mutual exclusivity. A wide variety of cues with possible theoretic interest was mentioned by at least a few respondents. These included music, humor, fear appeals, and normative appeals. However, the factor analysis of the items used in study 2 provides confidence that the coding scheme has some degree of validity.

The interaction of NFC with the differential impact of various cues on attitude change is well documented. This research implies that individuals are, indeed, aware of and can report the kinds of things that persuade them. The only way to test this would be to ask people what persuades them and examine their assertions experimentally. Such a study is underway.

Individuals' ability to report message characteristics that impact on them does not mean that they are aware of the cognitive strategies used for processing messages. It does, however, provide opportunities for investigation of such cognitive strategies.

At an applied level, the findings indicate that a viable means of determining what constitutes a persuasive message is the mere expedient of asking respondents what persuades them. While this is rare in academic research, it is common practice among applied researchers who conduct surveys and focus groups to devise marketing and political strategies. For applied researchers, then, the findings reported here provide a theoretical context for understanding the kinds of responses that interviewees report.

It should be noted that the samples from this study came, for the most part, from undergraduate communications students, who may be sensitized to report what they learned in class about persuasion. Other study in this area may want to test the propositions under consideration with different samples.

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Table 1

NFC by Cue Category
T-Tests for Parameter Estimates
Under Type III Sums of Squares

	Estimate	T for HO:	Pr > T	Standard Error
Intercept	-0.21	1.76	0.0800	0.12
Logical	0.92	3.37	0.0009	0.27
Information	0.23	1.52	0.1310	0.15
Source	-0.21	1.22	0.2236	0.17
Pers. Rel.	0.43	2.53	0.0123	0.17
Attention	-0.18	1.17	0.2441	0.15

Table 2

Persuasive Cue Items

Item No.	Item
1	. . . help me reach a personal goal.
2	. . . help make my life easier.
3	. . . are sincere.
4	. . . provide evidence in support of their positions.
5	. . . come from good sources.
6	. . . are presented in an appropriate manner.
7	. . . come from good people.
8	. . . are rational.
9	. . . help me attain things I desire.
10	. . . make sense.
11	. . . provide answers to issues about which I am concerned.
12	. . . come from good senders.
13	. . . are sent through good spokespersons.
14	. . . have information that applies to me personally.
15	. . . include the solution to a problem or situation about which I am concerned.
16	. . . come from someone who is well liked.
17	. . . include good arguments.
18	. . . have a lot of information in them.
19	. . . come from someone who is respected.
20	. . . are entertaining.
21	. . . come from someone who is qualified to talk about the subject of the message.
22	. . . inspire thought.
23	. . . come from good salespersons.
24	. . . capture my attention.
25	. . . are interesting.
26	. . . include data I can look at.
27	. . . come from a good person.
28	. . . help me satisfy a need I have.
29	. . . cause me to think.
30	. . . prove their positions.
31	. . . tell me how to get something I want.
32	. . . are logical.
33	. . . are believable.
34	. . . include several facts.
35	. . . use endorsers who are good.
36	. . . are honest.
37	. . . include proof.
38	. . . catch my attention.
39	. . . are credible.
40	. . . are well reasoned.
41	. . . come from someone who is reliable.
42	. . . come from someone who knows what he/she is talking about.
43	. . . are presented well.
44	. . . have in them incentives for me.

* Each item began with "Effective messages . . . . "

Table 3

Individual Item Loadings by Factor

			Factor		
Item	Logic	Source	Attention	Info.	Pers. Rel.
Provide Evidence	0.62	-0.07	0.13	0.06	0.05
Are Rational	0.62	0.36	-0.22	0.14	0.05
Make Sense	0.77	0.20	0.11	-0.06	0.19
Are Logical	0.73	0.24	0.04	0.33	-0.03
Are Believable	0.75	0.14	0.23	0.15	0.02
Are Credible	0.70	0.16	0.19	0.17	-0.00
Are Well Reasoned	0.75	0.11	0.19	0.24	0.09
From Good People	0.01	0.71	-0.18	0.08	0.13
Someone Well Liked	-0.01	0.75	0.24	-0.04	-0.15
Someone Respected	0.23	0.75	0.08	0.12	-0.04
Good Person	0.17	0.76	0.14	0.17	0.08
Good Endorsers	0.09	0.69	0.16	0.37	0.05
Are Entertaining	-0.14	0.30	0.68	0.05	-0.05
Capture Attention	0.36	-0.02	0.69	-0.06	0.22
Are Interesting	0.23	0.12	0.74	0.16	0.11
Catch Attention	0.34	-0.03	0.77	0.12	0.08
Information	0.15	0.36	-0.11	0.68	0.11
Data	0.12	0.09	0.19	0.70	-0.01
Facts	0.33	0.09	0.09	0.76	0.02
Personal Goal	0.04	-0.06	0.06	0.09	0.82
Life Easier	0.03	-0.02	0.08	-0.04	0.84
Things Desired	0.21	0.41	0.17	0.07	0.56

Table 4

Univariate Test Statistics
Analysis of Variance
Cue Factor Score by Need For Cognition
General Linear Model

	Estimate*	F-Value	P
Logical Cues	0.24	11.81	.001
Source Cues	-0.10	2.29	.14
Attention Cues	-0.10	2.24	.14
Information Cues	0.14	4.35	.05
Personal Relevance Cues	0.13	3.59	.06

* Estimates are mean z-scores of subjects agreement with the statements composing each of the five factors. These score are estimated for respondents at one standard deviation above the mean NFC score

The "Abortion Clause" of U.S. Foreign Population Policy: A Feminist Cultural Analysis of the Debate

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Paper for Presentation at the AEJMC Convention, Minnesota, August 1990.

The "Abortion Clause" of U.S. Foreign Population Policy:
A Feminist Cultural Analysis of the Debate

Background and Research Purpose

In 1984, the Reagan administration took two new initiatives in the area of international population policy. The first was the introduction of a proposal to withhold U.S. funding from international nongovernmental population organizations that promote abortion in any way, regardless of the source of funding for the abortions. The second was the public communication of a new stance with regard to the "population crisis." Whereas in the late 1960s and early 1970s the U.S. had spearheaded the move for establishing population programs in the third world on the basis of a perceived "population crisis," now the Reagan administration denied the existence of a population crisis, and insisted that the promotion of "free market" economies is the key to development, and to balancing population and environment.

Both of these areas were hotly debated from the start of their introduction. Both the areas were presented and discussed at the International Conference on Population in Mexico City in August,

1984. There were varied reactions to a policy statement prepared for the conference by the Reagan administration, incorporating both the new stances. Although the "free market" declaration was rejected by the conference, the "abortion" stance was accepted in a modified version. The abortion controversy as related to U.S. foreign funding extended into 1985 and 1986 and beyond, as the administration enforced its policy, and as various attempts were made to challenge the policy, both in Congress and in the Courts.

The current research will identify the major discourses in the debate, particularly focusing on the abortion clause, but also looking at the way in which the "free market" argument is welded, if at all, with the abortion argument, paying attention to internal inconsistencies that arise from this welding. The analysis is geared towards identifying the various "lobbies" in the debate, the rhetorical mechanisms used by these lobbies to influence policy, and the ideologies underlying the rhetoric or discourses. This analysis is important in feminist terms because it enables an understanding of the ways in which internal U.S. politics potentially influences the lives of third world women, and of the role of public discourses in this hegemonic process. Indeed, the outcome of this debate had potentially serious consequences on third world women, determining their degree of access to safe abortion and to abortion counselling, and to other family planning methods, to some extent.

Methods

First, the domain of the debate was identified -- the relevant texts and actors in the public discourse. All New York Times articles from 1984 to 1986 pertaining to the new policy initiatives have been perused. For 1984 and 1985, 60 such articles have been identified. (The other major U.S. newspapers carried such articles, no doubt, but will not be included in the present research, in order to keep it manageable, and to be able to look at different types of media. Articles from other newspapers will be used only if they are specifically referred to elsewhere, and in this way come to my notice.) The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature for March 1983 to December 1985, and the Magazine Index for 1986 were perused, and 78 relevant articles were identified, in various magazines and periodicals, ranging from Foreign Policy and World Press Review, to Nation and Mother Earth News to Christ Today. (Feminist magazines such as Ms were conspicuous by their absence in the index listings on the relevant topics.) The textual analysis was based mainly on these 60 newspaper articles and about 60 of the 78 periodical articles (I am in the process of tracing down and obtaining the remaining periodical articles).

The emphasis is on formal "public" discourse which is widely available. "In-group" rhetoric or discourse is not a major part of the study. For example, newsletters and bulletins that circulate within feminist and left groups, and within population circles are not used as texts. A separate project can focus on these, and draw relations between these and the more "public" discourses.

In this initial phase of what is a long-term project, the major "voices" in the debate have been identified, and an attempt has been made to identify the major ideological bases that shape these "voices" or discourses. This ideological analysis includes the question, "What are the meaning-structures about the third world, about first world and third world relations, and about third world women, that underlie the discourses/rhetoric?" An allied question that goes beyond the ideological analysis is, "How do these meaning structures relate to the vocalized concerns of third world women regarding population control?" Issues of Spare Rib, Connexions, Women's International Network News, Third Woman, and Women's Studies International Forum were used to establish the third world women's position on population (these were not used as texts).

Textual analysis was used to access the various discourses, and the meaning structures contained within the various discourses in the debate. This analysis operated at various levels of denotation and connotation, weaving in and out of manifest and latent levels of content to access both the rhetorical process and the cultural assumptions on which the process is based.

Excerpts from the Analysis

It appears that there were two major forces that propelled the new policy initiatives of the Reagan administration in the area of international population policy. One was the Right to Life lobby, and the other was an economists' lobby based on the book brought out by the professor Julian Simon, entitled The Ultimate Human Resource.

The Right to Life lobby has worked assiduously for many years to impose its anti-abortion stance on the U.S. government and on the U.S. public, and it has attempted to exert influence on both domestic and foreign policy. In 1973, the lobby succeeded in introducing the Helms Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act prohibiting the use of U.S. funds to support abortion. The opportunity to exercise further anti-abortion influence in the international domain arose with reports about coerced abortions in China in 1983.[1] The right-to-lifers reacted vehemently to this "revelation," by Steven Mosher (the doctoral candidate who was expelled by Stanford for unethical conduct) by decrying the situation in China. The report of events in China permitted the lobby to link "abortion" with "coercion," and thereby broaden the justification of the anti-abortion stance. The next step was to identify the link between U.S. funding and coerced abortions, which they did through the revelation that the United Nations Fund for

Population Activities (UNFPA), heavily funded by the U.S. government, had put money into the Chinese population program, and thereby "supported" coercive abortions in that country.

Using the further opportunity of a public forum in the form of the impending International Conference on Population in Mexico City, the right to lifers applied pressure on the administration to translate broad support for "Pro-Life" into concrete action in the international sphere, using the China argument as a lever. The initial administration response was to threaten non-renewal of funds slotted for UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities) because it funded population programs in China. The administration insisted that UNFPA provide public assurances that it does not fund any abortion-related activity in China. By the time of the Mexico conference, the policy initiative had expanded to include the intention to withhold U.S. funding from any non-governmental population agency or organization that used funds from any sources to perform or "actively promote" abortion overseas. So the policy platform expanded from one of objections against "coerced abortion" to a platform against abortions, period. According to the administration's policy paper,

> Our primary objective will be to encourage developing countries to adopt sound economic policies and, where appropriate, population policies consistent with respect for human dignity and family values...Attempts to use abortion, involuntary sterilization, or other coercive measures in family planning must be shunned.[7]

There is clear implication in the policy statement that abortion violates human dignity, and that there is a necessary link between abortion and coercion, in exact opposition to the free choice argument put forth by feminists in the U.S. as well as various third world countries. As expressed by the international organization, Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering (FINRRAGE), in a statement reached by consensus (to which third world women were equally active participants), women want access to safe contraception that does not harm women's bodies. They "reject the use of coercion, be it through force, incentives or disincentives in the name of population control policies." But they also made a unanimous demand that "women shall not be crimininalized for choosing and performing abortion." Linking abortion with coercion in the way the Reagan policy paper goes against the grain of third world women's demands.[3]

It is all the more important to make the third world women's stance clear, in view of the fact that the pro-life lobby behind the anti-abortion policy initiative has used rhetorical strategies situating itself as defender of third world women. They used particularly those aspects of Mosher's accounts that brought out the hardship and cruelty inflicted upon Chinese women -- accounts of women being forced to have late-term abortions, sometimes kidnapped en masse and forced to have abortions. These accounts are meant to position the pro-life action as an intervention in the violation of human rights, particularly the rights of Chinese women.

This is the appropriate juncture to add another aspect of third world women's position on population and development issues. Time and time again, women of third world countries have made it clear that they themselves must protest against the injustices inflicted upon them by their own countries, and that the only appropriate role sympathetic feminists worldwide should play is to show solidarity and support in response to specific requests by women's groups involved in struggle in the third world. Third world feminists are opposed to economic and social injustice, and to coercion in the area of reproduction, but they are also opposed to imperialist intervention. They uphold the sovereignty and right to self-determination of their countries, at the same time as they decry violation of women's rights within their own countries.[4] Considering that Chinese women did not invite the Reagan administration's anti-abortion policy initiative, their use of the "Chinese women's misery" story is simply a rhetorical ploy in their efforts to enforce anti-abortion policy worldwide.

The pro-life ideological package harbors internal inconsistencies that become apparent in the present context. The mandate against abortion creates situations in which women who cannot afford children, whose children's life chances are poor, are forced to have their children. Also, a majority of pro-lifers are against birth control information and dissemination, and also support cuts in social services geared towards supporting single mothers. All in all, a situation is created in which a lack of birth control knowledge leads to a high rate of early pregnancies, women who cannot afford to have children are forced to have them, and the state cannot provide adequate support for these children and thereby offer them a decent life. As several newspaper accounts make clear, the inconsistencies in the particular anti-abortion "Mexico policy" are also apparent:

> ...And when people understand the economic and social value of small families, and use family-planning effectively, they have less need to resort to drastic measures such as abortion.[5]

Robert McNamara, also a vocal opponent of the Mexico policy and an ardent supporter of population control efforts, says the following:

> [The policy]...will lead to more abortions rather than less, because such organizations as International Planned Parenthood, now substantially dependent on U.S. funding, will no longer receive U.S. funds, and yet it is one of the most effective forces in the world for population planning.[6]

According to this argument, mostly put forth by population control advocates, the Mexico policy actually creates the possibility of greater, not less abortions. By withholding funds from both United Nations' Fund for Population Activities and from International Planned Parenthood Federation, the administration is narrowing the options available to third world populations. By making it more difficult to prevent pregnancies, the possibility is created for a greater number of abortions. Downplaying the importance of population control contributes to this possibility as well, according to the population control lobby.

An additional contradiction in the Mexico policy arises from the juxtaposition of the free market argument with the anti-abortion argument. The free market logic would imply the provision of any method of family planning in response to demand, including the provision of abortion in response to demand. The anti-abortion argument, on the other hand, denies abortion despite demand for it, on the basis of ideological conviction. However, both the anti-abortion and free-market agendas are separately consistent with Reagan-era domestic policy, and both respond to right wing constituencies. The inconsistencies between the two platforms reflect inconsistencies within right wing ideology -- particularly the tensions in the free market economy platform. Protectionist measures against foreign imports, deregulation of certain industries, and restrictions on availability of birth control all lie within the right wing agenda. Despite the internal inconsistencies, the Mexico initiative certainly brought Reagan era international population policy in line with domestic policy on abortion and the "free market."

Another inconsistency that is invisible from this public debate becomes obvious if placed in the context of third world women's concerns. The Reagan policy statement says

> Once a society achieves a certain level of real economic development, however, the incentives to child-bearing will change -- especially where women have achieved higher education and broader economic opportunities, and

are able to obtain their rightful place in society.[7] But the same policy statement emphasizes that free market economies are the only route to successful economic development. Numerous studies in the area of women and development have demonstrated the deleterious effects of the spread of market economy on women's employment, health and social status. In several countries experiencing increased capitalist penetration, women of the lowest classes are leading a more precarious existence than ever before, working at insecure jobs with extremely low pay and very poor work conditions.[8] So although the policy statement appears to support full participation of women in the economy as a spur to family planning, the insistence on free market economies creates internal contradictions in the argument.

But the "free market" proposal had other important and ironic impacts at the International Conference itself. First of all, the new U.S. policy was a complete reversal of the stance presented at the World Population Conference at Bucharest in 1974. In Bucharest, the U.S. pushed population control, and various third world countries questioned this emphasis, asserting that economic and political inequities would have to be addressed, particularly at the international scale, before population problems could be addressed. Several third world nations had adopted the slogan at the Bucharest conference that "development is the best contraceptive." However, a concerted campaign by the international population establishment, spearheaded by the U.S., during the 1970s helped create a near-consensus on the need for population control among third world nations. This effort, combined with the U.S. policy reversal in Mexico City, had the effect of putting the burden on the U.N., particularly third world countries, to defend population control -- the positions were exactly reversed! This framing of the debate also had the pernicious effect of downplaying the important issues taken up in Bucharest -- those of political and economic inequities at the national and international levels, and the linkages between economic and social restructuring, environment, and population growth. The Secretary General of the Conference, in his opening statement, did make reference to economic inequalities, protectionist restrictions by the U.S. (unfair terms of trade), and the foreign debt burden, as retardants of economic development, but there is no mention of this argument in either the New York Times or the major periodicals after this point, in articles about the conference and the abortion clause. The Reagan policy statement captured the conference agenda to a large extent.

The abortion controversy had the similar effect of limiting the domain of the discourses. By linking the U.S. anti-abortion stance to an anti-coercion stance, an articulation of alternative discourse rejecting both coercion and anti-abortion, and effectively questioning the necessary link between abortion and coercion, was made more difficult. As a result of the way in which the U.S. stance was framed, the opposition to the U.S. stance did not question the values surrounding abortion. Instead, most of the opposing parties focused on the hardship that would result if private agencies' funds were restricted.

The major opposition both during and after the International Conference was constituted of international population agencies, that objected on the following grounds: First, that taking money away from private agencies would undermine non-abortion related family planning activities as well, and may even increase the rate of abortions in the long run because of non-availability of alternatives; and second, that they, the international private agencies, could not impose particular restrictions at the operational level (could not dictate how the money is to be used or not used in such detail) on their local affiliates in third world countries.

The international population agencies also provided the most vocal opposition to the "free market" argument, mainly because it denied the existence of a population crisis, and the necessity of attacking population growth rates head on. Most of their discourse was aimed at establishing the "reality" of a population crisis. Once again, there was no mention of the linkages between economic and political inequities, development, and population growth.

The major outlines of the ideological nexus on which the population lobby's platform is based are well exemplified by an article by Robert S. McNamara appearing in Foreign Affairs just before the Mexico conference. The entire tone is definitely neo-Malthusian. Population projections of mind-boggling numbers of people, predictions of political instability created by poverty, and other forms of doomsaying are very much a part of the scenario drawn here. Eugenic fears run through the argument as well, underlying predictions of how fast the population of poor countries will grow relative to the population of the "developed world." The following passage exemplifies the neo-Malthusian approach, and some of the underlying eugenic elements:

> India will more than double in the next 45 years, becoming almost 40 percent larger than China today. Bangladesh in the same time will have nearly tripled and will have 259 million people jammed into an area, alternately swept by flood and drought, the size of the state of Wisconsin. Mexico, which today has the most rapidly growing labor force of any large country in the world, will more than double in size. And Kenya, in which 17 million people are already putting heavy pressure on the limited supply of arable land, will have quintupled.[9]

In this ideological structure, political instability is predicted as one of the main negative outcomes of the "population explosion," and political instability is expected to lead, in turn, to the establishment of authoritarian governments. McNamara rounds out the argument by asserting that if reasoned action is not taken today to persuade people to exercise family planning in larger numbers, governments, and families will be forced to take drastic measures, such as higher levels of abortion, particularly of female foetuses, and higher rates of female infanticide, when the explosion becomes unmanageable. This language describing "what is to come" if population lobbyists' warnings are not heeded is reminiscent of the effects of the Chinese population policy as described in the press, particularly by the right-to-lifers. The similarity in imagery points to the shared ground upon which both the right-to-lifers and the population lobbyists stand. They have diametrically opposite views on abortion and family planning, but they are both wary of structural change, particularly revolutionary change, and they both assume U.S. dominance in the area of international population policy -- neither is directly concerned with the violation of the sovereignty of third world nations.

Also, both the right-to-lifers and the population lobbyists pose themselves as defenders of women's welfare. Both speak of female infanticide and large-scale abortions with very negative connotations. They are both forced to include third world women in their rhetoric because this is a necessary part of the terrain on which their battle is being waged. But neither respond to the demands of third world women -- their platforms and particularly the history of their actions makes this clear.

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America, one of the most vocal opponents of the Mexico policy, attacks it on this basis:

> The Mexico City policy not only fails to respond to the problem of illegal abortion, it attempts to cut off access to safe and legal abortion and threatens the means of reducing the need for abortion -- contraceptive programs. It actually requires international family planning agencies to act as police in foreign countries,

> ensuring that their grantees do not advocate changing the law in countries where abortion is illegal or refer women for abortions in countries where it is legal. Thus it violates the First Amendment rights of American citizens to free speech and association...[10]

PPFA's suit against AID adds the following objections: the policy attempts to prevent patients from receiving full and accurate medical information, and it denies women access to family planning programs that have proven their safety and effectiveness.

The objection to policing organizations in foreign countries is based on a concern with First Amendment rights of Americans, although some anti-imperialist rhetoric is used here. Women's rights rhetoric is also part of PPFA's defense. Just as the Reagan administration and the right-to-lifers aim to create consistency between their rhetoric in the domestic and international arena, Planned Parenthood needs to project a consistent pro-choice, pro-women's -rights image both nationally and internationally.

But PPFA's rhetoric has to be put into the context of its overall activities in the third world. What Betsy Hartmann has to say about IPPF applies to PPFA and several other family planning organizations:

> At the same time that IPPF promotes family planning as a basic human right, it uses overpopulation rhetoric to build support for its programs and takes an incautious attitude toward contraceptive safety. As a result, its member associations have often played a double role: On the positive side, they have bravely introduced family planning programs into hostile environments; on the negative side, they have helped pave the way for population control interventions and programs that neglect women's overall health.[11]

Conclusions and Discussion

The textual analysis has delineated the major lobbies in the debate on the abortion clause. The pro-life lobby and the international population agencies were found to be the major parties in the debate. Each of these lobbies was at pains to project a consistent image, bringing rhetoric in the international family planning arena in line with rhetoric surrounding domestic policy. At the same time, however, inconsistencies existed within the ideological nexus of each party, and these inconsistencies were pointed out. Further, contradictions were created by welding the "free market" argument with the anti-abortion argument, and some of these contradictions were also pointed out.

Although the pro-life lobby and the population control lobbies were based on divergent ideologies regarding birth control and abortion, they shared some common ground in their assumptions about first world-third world relations. Neither of these parties directly questioned the imperialist nature of the administration's policy. This is consistent with the histories of both the right-to-life group and the population organizations, both of which have participated in the U.S. hegemonic project in third world countries in their own ways.

Both the right-to-life lobby and the population control lobby used rhetoric showing concern for third world women's welfare. But under further scrutiny, it became apparent that neither responds to third world women's vocalized concerns. In fact, neither of these lobbies ever quotes third world women directly. Rather, they speak for them. In fact, the press reports and periodical articles are completely devoid of third world women's voices, and only very rarely quote third world leaders present at the International Conference, when reporting on the conference and the abortion clause.

This is a preliminary textual analysis of the abortion clause debate. Deeper analysis of the texts will yield a greater understanding of meaning structures. The text can also be further related to the histories of the anti-abortion lobby and the population control lobby. In elaborating on the second, it would be very instructive to compare news coverage of the Bucharest conference in 1974 with the Mexico conference, and to attempt to trace the changes in U.S. population policy over this time span. Another fruitful line of analysis would be to analyze the debates on the abortion clause that took place on the Congress floor. Such an analysis would throw light on the rhetorical strategies and underlying strategies that directly influenced the lawmaking process.

NOTES

1.This was also an opportune time to attempt to exert influence for many other reasons. The right-to-lifers had suffered defeats in the Courts and Congress in the recent past, including the failed effort in 1982 to withdraw federal funding from family planning agencies operating in the U.S. which perform or promote abortions, regardless of source of funding. Election year was coming up, and it was an appropriate time for the lobby to turn now to the international family planning area to test its political influence.

2."U.S. Says 'No' to Overseas Abortion Funding." Christianity Today 28: 75-76.

3."FINNRAGE Conference in Bangladesh." Connexions 32 (1990), pp.16-18. Also see "Let Him Withdraw." Connexions, Summer/Fall 1985, pp.48-50.

4.See Angela Davis, "Sex-Egypt" in Women: A World Report. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp.325-348 and Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," Feminist Review No.17 (July 1984), pp.3-20 for a forceful statement of the self-determination argument.

5.Rafael M. Salas. "Poisoning Population Assistance." New York Times June 28, 1984.

6.Richard J. Meislin. "Population Parley to Open in Mexico Today." The New York Times August 6, 1984.

7."Statement by U.S. Delegate to the Conference on Population in Mexico City." The New York Times August 9, 1984.

8.See Maria Mies, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labor, London: Zed Books, 1986, and Maria Mies et al. Women: The Last Colony, London: Zed Books, 1988 for excellent discussions of the effect of the spread of market relations on women in poor countries.

9.Robert S. McNamara. "Time Bomb or Myth?" Foreign Affairs 62 (Summer 1984), p.1115.

10.Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc. The U.S. International Family Planning Program Under Siege. New York: PPFA, 1987, p.3.

11.Betsy Hartmann, Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control and Contraceptive Choice. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987, pp.114-115.

The Impact of Risk Message Content and Construction on Comments about Risks Embedded in "Letters to Friends"

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Presented to the Communication Theory and Methodology Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention, Minneapolis, August 1990.

The Impact of Risk Message Content and Construction on Comments about Risks Embedded in"Letters to Friends"

Understanding how individuals make sense of messages is of great importance to scholars of risk communication. If, as policy makers suspect, we derive much of our information about risks from both mediated and interpersonal channels rather than from personal experience, then exploring the ability of individuals to comprehend information embedded within those channels is of value.

In this manuscript we describe a study that evaluates the impact of risk information from mediated channels by asking subjects to recall the information in ways that may reflect their appraisal of the risk. Specifically, we manipulate both attributes of the ways in which mediated risk messages are stylistically constructed and the content of the messages themselves and then examine individuals' cognitive and affective responses to them by asking respondents to write about the risks in letters to friends.

We locate this search for impacts within an evolving conceptualization of the relationship between information and risk judgment, a conceptualization that posits that messages may differentially impact individuals' cognitive and affective responses to risk. The strategy of asking respondents to, in effect, summarize what they read in a form accessible to a friend not only serves as a kind of simulated interpersonal channel but also offers us an opportunity to examine respondents' learning of the central elements of the risk stories used in the study.

Mediated Risk Messages

Although a few scholars have examined patterns in media coverage of scientific and technological risks (see, for example, Combs and Slovic 1979; Sandman, Sachsman, Greenberg and Gochfeld, 1987; Singer and Endreny, 1987; Stephens and Edison, 1982), they have not systematically tested for effects on readers but, typically, have inferred them.

One can, however, glean from these studies some sense of the elements of stories that researchers think will influence risk judgments. The work suggests that two classes of phenomena may be important: content and stylistic elements.

Content factors deal with the very essence of the information being conveyed. With respect to risk stories, for example, researchers have gone looking for the presence of quantified risk estimates in journalistic accounts and generally have found few of them (Sandman et al, 1987; Singer and Endreny, 1987). Implicit in such a search are two assumptions: (1) Types of content such as risk estimates are necessary--although perhaps not sufficient--to an understanding of the risk at hand, and (2) Variance in the way risks are characterized (i.e., a low probability versus a high probability of coming to harm) will produce variance in individuals' risk judgments and in their risk-related behaviors.

Stylistic decisions, on the other hand, are things "done" to content by writers or editors. Writers must package information, and the strategies they choose could have pronounced impacts on reader perceptions of content. Such strategies for journalists include headlines, choice of information for inclusion in the lead, and word and phrase choices within the story body. Although attempts are now being made to understand the internal frames that individuals bring to mediated messages (see, for example, McLeod, Pan and Rucinski, 1989), journalism scholars have made little effort to examine the influence of the "frames" offered up by the messages themselves.

If readers are influenced by media stories about risks, are they reacting primarily to the content of the stories, or do stylistic strategies also have an effect? Both content and stylistic attributes may act to make information more vivid, more salient, but we have no idea of their effects relative to one another; they may be additive or interactive. In this study we manipulate two content factors--level of risk and severity of outcome--and two stylistic factors--headline and lead.

Content factors. Protection motivation theory, one of the more successful models being employed today to examine individuals' responses to health threats, suggests that the probability of exposure to a risk and its anticipated severity of outcome are important factors leading to behavioral modification in the face of a risky situation (Rogers, 1975; Beck and Lund, 1981; Rogers, 1983). Specifically, protection motivation theorists argue that a message about a heath threat causes an individual to cognitively appraise (1) the noxiousness or severity of the threatened event, (2) the probability of the occurrence of the event, and (3) the efficacy of a recommended coping response in order to construct affective and behavioral responses to the risk.

This study manipulates level of risk and severity of outcome by placing them explicitly in stories. Level of risk is a quantitative statement of the likelihood that an individual will incur the risk in question; we label this variable "baserate" in subsequent tables. Severity of outcome is the degree of illness that will result from exposure to the risk.

Stylistic factors. We examine in this study two kinds of stylistic strategies whose impacts on risk judgment may be conceptually distinct.

Framing strategies: Van Dijk (1977) argues that comprehension of a message--whether the message is written or oral--requires an individual to organize, reduce and then represent discrete bits of information in a larger, more abstract structure that he terms a "macro-structure." Such structures, says van Dijk, are defined as "semantic structures of discourse whose meaning and reference (are) defined in terms of their constituents' meanings" (p.7). Since individuals build these macro-structures in the course of reading (listening to) a text, the text itself can provide clues that guide readers during the meaning construction process. According to van Dijk, such clues include titles, initial summaries, and declarations of content or intentions.

In other words, information made available to readers before they become embedded in the text body may help establish the framework used to interpret the text. For example, if one varied the headline atop a story about a nuclear power plant accident from "Nuclear plant accident releases radiation" to "Safety systems in plant prevent meltdown," one might expect readers to interpret the information in the story differently. A reader of the former might assume a "danger" framework with a reader of the latter might interpret the story information in terms of "safety."

Although journalistic accounts make an overt effort to offer audiences such framing cues, it is difficult to find studies of their effects. Headlines have long been identified as important framers (see, for example, Tannenbaum, 1953), and we manipulate headline content in this study. Specifically, headlines either do or do not contain information about the presence of a risk.

Information vividness: Nisbett and Ross (1980) argue that components of text can make information more "vivid" and thus contribute to comprehension. They define vivid information as material that is "(a) emotionally interesting, (b) concrete and image-producing, and (c) proximate in a sensory, temporal, or spatial way" (p.45).

Vividness should enhance memory of information, they assert, for several reasons. One is that concrete information may allow the reader to code the information in both images and verbal forms, and memory of visual images is better than memory of either words or sentences. Another reason is that vivid information--because it is necessarily more detailed ("a large, red convertible" rather than "the car")--requires more processing time and more sensory pathways. Thus, individuals may devote a disproportionately larger amount of time and energy to storing vivid information , and vivid information should then be more available in memory than pallid information.

Within mass communication scholarship, vividness has not be well studied. Journalism scholars have worried about the ability of vivid journalistic accounts to distort audience interpretations of events (see, for example, Kennamer, 1988). And two agenda-setting studies come up with conflicting results. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) found vividness (operationalized as a personalized narrative) in news stories to have no impact at all on individuals' reports of the salience of issues. Yagade and Dozier (1990), on the other hand, found that the media were more effective in influencing the salience of "concrete" rather than "abstract" issues.

Respondents in this latter study considered the concrete issues to be easier to visualize; the researchers suggest that those issues were, thus, more vivid.

Vividness has been operationalized in a variety of ways by researchers--from use of visuals to variation in textual detail--but the hallmark of vividness manipulations seems to be concreteness, use of detail. In this study we operationalize vividness as the use of a narrative lead on a story; the use of a narrative is consistent with the work of other scholars (Nisbett and Ross, 1980; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987).

Obviously, content and stylistic factors are not independent of one another. A stylistic strategy that increases the amount and concreteness of information presented--as is the case with the choice of a narrative lead for a story--clearly changes content. Similarly, manipulating severity of symptoms (a content variable) across experimental conditions may also amount to creating variance in information vividness, for some symptoms may be more concrete, more visual than others . We maintain our content/stylistic distinction at this stage in part because it reflects a traditional way of categorizing mediated information structures. But we will return to this classificatory problem at the discussion stage.

The Impact of Message Content and Structure on Risk Judgment

Policy makers are spending huge sums these days on studies of nonscientists' reactions to risk messages. Risk communication has become big business, and even the prestigious National Academy of Sciences has entered the arena with a lengthy treatise on the topic (National Research Council, 1989).

While conceptual understanding of the sources of such messages and of their relationships to audience have come a long way (see, for example, Freudenburg, 1988; Bradbury, 1989), an understanding of the role played by information in the formation of risk judgment is not well understood. In fact, policy makers and various agencies have rushed to fund a plethora of message manipulation studies without attending closely to basic questions about the relationship between information and risk judgment. Not surprisingly, the results of these studies vary considerably across time and topic (See, for example, such summaries as Fisher and Sjoberg, forthcoming.).

However, a few scholars have begun to develop conceptual frameworks within which to understand these information/judgment links. We have enlisted two conceptual approaches in this study.

Social amplification of risk. Kasperson, Renn and Slovic (1987) assert that information carried within a variety of channels can serve to heighten or attenuate public perceptions of risk and related risk behavior. They term this process the "social amplification of risk," although they make clear that information structures can dampen perceptions as well as amplify them. Although these scholars lodge this concept at a macro level (they propose to study the role of information across various channels within a social system), their notion of amplification is consistent with the arguments of Nisbett and Ross (1980) that attributes of information at a more micro level can make information more memorable or can even generate more extreme inferences than the original information would warrant.

In this study, we propose to look at the ability of content and stylistic variables to make risks seem more or less likely to happen, to make them seem more or less worrisome. This, we argue, is amplication or attenuation at a micro level.

Differential impacts of information on affective and cognitive responses to risk. If information indeed has an impact on risk judgment, then work accomplished by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since the mid-1980s suggests that it is important to distinguish between impacts on knowledge of and attitudes about the risk in question. This work (for a summary discussion, see Dunwoody and Neuwirth, forthcoming) suggests that individuals distinguish between cognitive and affective dimensions of risk judgment and that mediated information may have differential impacts on those two dimensions. In a study of young adults' perceptions of AIDS, for example, exposure to mediated channels predicted only to "knowledge of" AIDS, while exposure to interpersonal channels predicted to both knowledge and level of worry about AIDS.

If mediated information is more likely to influence knowledge of a risk rather than level of worry about a risk, then one would expect content and stylistic manipulations of information within a mediated channel to influence cognitive responses more than affective ones. But no one has examined that question systematically. One experimental study (Dunwoody and Friestad, 1987) that held channel and risk content constant but manipulated stylistic attributes of the messages found that the manipulations did not interfere with recall of the level of risk--everyone remembered those cognitive bits of information--but did make the risks in question seem more worrisome. Thus, attributes of mediated messages influenced the affective dimension of risk judgment, a finding at variance with our speculations above.

However, the study design was not well suited to an exploration of linkages between channel and risk judgment. Firstly, it forced subjects to use only one channel, thus foreclosing differential use of a variety of channels. Secondly, it measured impacts in the short term; it might be the case that recall of information at a later date would be channel-specific. Thirdly, variance in "knowledge of" the risk was almost nonexistent in the study because nearly all subjects were able to recall the level of risk they had encountered in the story. That might be evidence of a rather profound cognitive impact.

This study has many of the same limitations as the one above. We constrain subjects to the use of one mediated channel. We measure information effects in the short term. But our contribution is twofold: We manipulate both content and stylistic attributes of risk messages and we utilize what we feel is a more natural way of measuring information impacts (although the method, discussed below, comes equipped with its own complexities). The intent in this study is to try to track specific elements of content from story through individual perception to information that the individual chooses to pass on to another.

We define risk judgment in this study, in Slovic's terms, as "the judgments people make when they are asked to characterize and evaluate hazardous activities and technologies" (1987, p. 280). We utilize two dimensions of risk judgment: cognitive (what individuals know of a risky situation) and affective (how worried they are about that situation).

The Dependent Variables

One way to measure cognitive and affective responses to messages in experimental settings is to ask respondents about such outcomes in a straightforward manner. We do that in this study, and we will examine the impact of our manipulations on those responses. But our primary dependent variables are derived in a different way. After reading the experimental stimuli (news stories about specific risky situations), respondents were instructed to write a letter to a friend, telling that individual about the particular risk.

Such a strategy does not tap simple recall but, rather, elicits information that the individual both can recall and finds salient, given the task at hand. Lazarus and Smith (1988) argue that individuals don't move directly from cognitions about a phenomenon to affective responses to that phenomenon but, rather, incorporate an intermediate step: appraisal. Appraisal, in their words, "is a form of personal meaning consisting of evaluations of the significance of this knowledge for well-being" (p.282). Asking individuals to "evaluate" a risk on behalf of another individual may be one way of accessing that intermediate step.

Additionally, asking for an appraisal may generate information that approximates the mix of cognitive and affective information recalled by an individual who is trying to transmit interpersonally to another. Writing differs in many ways from speaking, but Daly et. al. (1989) argue that writing and speaking share many of the same cognitive mechanisms. Thus, evaluating the content of these letters to friends may help us begin to understand how individuals "make sense" of risk information on behalf of others.

This study, then, examines the impact of content and stylistic strategies, first on subject's judgments about their own level of risk and their level of worry and then on explicit references to cognitive and affective dimensions of the risk situations in letters to friends (For a discussion of free recall versus recognition measures, see Wyer and Srull, 1988.).

Judgment of personal risk. After reading the stories, individuals were asked to indicate numerically the likelihood that they, personally, would encounter the risk in question (cognitive risk estimate). They also indicated on a numerical scale how worried they were about the risk (affective worry estimate). As noted in the next section, our intent is to use these variables as intervening ones.

Two types of information were culled from the letters to friends:

Cognitive appraisal. The two variables chosen for analysis were the presence/absence of a quantitative risk estimate (e.g., 1 in 9 chances of getting sick) and of a generalized risk statement (e.g., students are getting sick) in the letters.

Affective appraisal. We analyze two variables within this domain. One measures the extent to which a subject included sentences in the letters evaluating the risk at hand as worrisome and the other the extent to which subjects included sentences evaluating the risks as not worrisome.

The Model

Figure 1 illustrates our expectations. We anticipate that the four independent variables--risk estimate, outcome severity, frame and vividness--will influence individuals' judgments about their own level of risk and their personal level of worry. Those dimensions of risk judgment, in turn, will drive individuals' decisions to incorporate numerical risk estimates, general statements of risk, and affective statements into letters to friends.

Method

Subjects and Design

The research participants were 252 students in introductory journalism and mass communication classes who were awarded extra course credit for their participation.

A 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design was used to assess the effects of the four manipulated variables on the dependent variables of interest. Two levels of outcome severity (high and low), two levels of risk level (high and low),[1] two levels of lead vividness (personalized and non-personalized) and two levels of headline (risky and non-risky) were manipulated.

Procedure and Stimulus Materials

Subjects met in small groups ranging in size from two to 16. Individuals were assigned randomly to one of the 16 experimental conditions. The study was presented as an effort to gauge reactions to the use of news stories about the university disseminated by the University News and Information Service via computer modem.

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[1] We established high and low risk levels before the experiment began by showing groups of students the risky situations designed for this study and asking them to volunteer risk levels that they thought corresponded to "high" risk and "low" risk. Their numerical responses were averaged to obtain the risk probabilities used here.

Subjects were told that all the stories they would see were excerpted from the video-text news service. The stories were presented on a computer screen, and each subject worked individually at his or her computer terminal. For most of the experiment, Hypercard was used to present the stimuli and measures to subjects; responses were placed directly in a computer file.

After verbal instructions were given, subjects viewed a screen containing a menu of six news stories especially created for the experiment. Three of the stories were of general interest to students (time use, apartment hunting and academic standards) and three stories were about hazards (fluorescent lighting and its effects on classroom performance, an illness caused by chemically treated library books, and a parasite in the campus water supply). After selecting and reading the stories, subjects answered detailed questions about each potential threat.

Data from the parasite and library book stories are the focus of this report. The parasite story reported that Giardia, an organism typically encountered in wilder areas of the state, had found its way into university-area water supplies and was causing discomfort in some proportion of students. The book story reported that an attempt to retard paper deterioration by dipping library books in a chemical bath was making students who handled the books ill.

Subjects in the experiment received different versions of the parasite and book stories. Manipulations of the parasite story consisted of (a) high- or low-outcome severity (severe diarrhea lasting for more that two weeks or slight stomach cramps lasting less than 45 minutes), (b) high- or low-risk level (odds of 1 in 12 or 1 in 3,100 of becoming ill), (c) personalized or nonpersonalized lead ("When pharmacy major Jack Snyder experienced stomach cramps last month, he immediately recognized..." or "A parasite has found its way into Madison's water supply and is making students sick."), and (d) risky or non-risky headlines ("Water parasite afflicts students" or "New type of wildlife on campus").

The library book story was manipulated as follows: (a) high- or low-outcome severity (severe headache, debilitating stomach aches with nausea lasting 24 hours or mild head and stomach aches with low-level nausea lasting for 45 minutes), (b) high- or low-risk level (odds of 1 in 9 or 1 in 2,000 of becoming ill), (c) personalized or nonpersonalized lead ("Mary Malone, a sophomore at UW-Madison, spent a Saturday at Memorial Library and then checked out several books to take home. By midday on Sunday, Malone felt so sick..." or "Libraries throughout campus have treatedtheir books with a chemical compound that will preserve paper, thus saving the university thousands of dollars over the years in book replacement costs. However, recent evidence . . ."), and (d) risky or non-risky headlines ("Chemically treated books make students sick" or "New treatment protects crumbling books"). Samples of the book and parasite stories are in Appendix H.

In the middle of the experimental session, subjects received instructions to switch from their computer to a paper packet. Upon opening the packets, subjects received instructions to write a letter to a friend who would be coming to campus, "giving the information you would choose to tell about the water parasite/library book story." Subjects were asked to write a separate letter about each of the two risks. After completing the letters, subjects returned to the computer to answer more questions.

When all subjects had completed their session at the computer, they participated in a debriefing session that consisted of a full explanation of the purpose of the study, were alerted to the deception involved and were informed that the hazards mentioned in the experiment did not exist.

Intervening Variables

Subjects were asked to estimate the likelihood that they would encounter the risk in question ("Considering your own circumstances, how likely is it that you will be one of the persons affected by the chemical used to treat UW library books/the parasite found in campus area tap water? Answer: My own chances are: One chance in _______") and to indicate their personal level of worry about the risk ("How worried are you personally that the chemical used to treat UW library books/the parasite found in campus area tap water will make you sick?"). Subjects were asked to represent level of worry with a number ranging from 0 (no risk) to 100 (as worried as you've ever been about something).

Dependent Measures

Responses from the letter writing task were content analyzed. The texts were coded for mentions of general risk (e.g., There's a chance that...) and the presence of numeric risk estimates (e.g., One in 2,000 people are coming down with...). Also coded were the number of statements conveying general worry (e.g., watch out) and no worry (e.g., It's nothing to get excited about.).

Responses of six subjects were deemed by coders to be inappropriate. Reading times for 10 subjects were lost due to computer failure, resulting in an effective sample of 236 subjects. Intercoder reliabilities and summary statistics for all variables used in the analysis are found in Appendix A.

Control Variables

The amount of time used to read each story, the order in which the letters were written, the number of words in each letter, perceived believability of each story, and the log-transformed frequency of touching library books and drinking campus area water were employed as statistical controls.

Statistical Analysis

Path analysis was used to test the relationships (main effects and interactions) between independent, intervening, and dependent variables. Independent variables were contrast-coded prior to entry. Variables representing two-way, three-way, and four-way interactions among the independent variables were created by multiplying independent variables (e.g., a two-way interaction between level of risk and severity of outcome was represented by multiplying these two variables; see Cohen and Cohen, 1975). LISREL was used to produce Maximum Likelihood (ML) parameter estimates.[2]

Since responses to the two stories vary, we will report findings separately for each risk story.

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[2] PRELIS was used to create an input matrix for use by LISREL. The correlation coefficients produced are adjusted to reflect each variable's level of measurement.

Results

Individuals estimated their likelihood of getting sick from the book chemical or from the water parasite as similar (median value of 1 in 1,000 in each case), although the logged values in Appendix A indicate that they felt they were a bit more likely to get sick from the parasite than from library books. Estimates of worry show a similar difference; on average, subjects rated their personal level of worry about the parasite as higher (36.7, with 100 registering the highest possible level of worry) than their level of worry about the book preservation chemicals (24.3).

The letters to friends ranged in length from 29 to 165 words for the book risk and from 26 to 191 words for the parasite story. While similar proportions of respondents (38.9% for the book story and 38.5% for the parasite story) mentioned a specific risk estimate in their letters, the number making any kind of generalized risk statement varied considerably across the two stories. Specifically, 77.6% of the book letters contained at least one general risk statement while only 42.7% of the parasite letters did so.

In their book letters, 85% of respondents mentioned at least one generalized symptom (becoming sick or ill) and 58.9% mentioned at least one specific symptom. Most letters (88.6%) mentioned a causal agent (using the term "chemical" most of the time) and 79.7% explained the purpose of the chemical.

Of those writing letters about parasites in the water supply, 56.5% mentioned at least one general symptom and 52% mentioned at least one specific symptom. A whopping 93.5% mentioned a causal agent, the great majority identifying it as a parasite.

For each story, from one quarter to one third of the respondents included sentences that urged readers to either worry or not worry about the risk being discussed.

The rest of this section focuses on the strength of the paths illustrated in Figure 1. Because so many of the statistically significant results are third- and fourth-order interactions, we represent these results in tables and graphs. We will first talk about the impact of our manipulations on subjects' estimates of likelihood of harm and personal level of worry. Then we will utilize those two variables as intervening ones in subsequent examinations of the impact of the manipulations on individuals' inclusion of cognitive and affective risk information in their letters to friends.

Predictors of risk and worry estimates. Our manipulations influenced worry and risk estimates differentially , as illustrated in Table 1.

In both stories, the interaction of symptom severity and personalization influenced risk estimate (see Figures 2 and 4, and Appendices B and C). In fact, that was the only significant interaction for the book story, while for the parasite story both headline and risk estimate (baserate) played roles in two other interactions. Use of a personalized lead increases odds estimates for both stories only under certain coditions; in fact, the combination of a personalized lead and severe symptoms in both stories reduces subjects' estimates of their likelihood of encountering the risk.

For the parasite story (see Figures 4 and 5), increasing the risk level in the story raises readers' own estimates of odds when the story features mild symptoms but has the opposite effect when symptoms are severe. We discuss the possibility that combinations of manipulations may have produced a type of discounting later in the paper.

For both stories, level of worry was primarily a function of story content: As level of risk (baserate) rises and severity of symptoms (severity) increases, so does level of worry. When it comes to the book story, headline interacts with the two content variables. As illustrated in Figure 3 (data displayed in Appendix B), when risk estimate in the story is low, a risky headline increases level of worry across both mild and severe symptoms. But when the risk estimate in the story is high and symptoms are severe, the presence of a risky headline causes a sharp drop in level of worry.

In summary, while content (risk estimate and symptom severity) had the greatest impact on subjects' personal level of worry, it was an interaction between symptom severity and a stylistic variable--personalization--that had the greatest impact on individuals' estimates of their own level of risk. These variables worked in predictable ways in most cases--the higher the risk the greater level of worry, for example--but in stories that contained severe symptoms the impact would often be the opposite--things that should increase risk estimate and level of worry, such as a personalized lead, instead caused these things to decrease.

Impact of manipulations on inclusion of cognitive information in letters. Table 2 contains information about predictors of inclusion in letters of information--both specific and general--about likelihood of encountering the risk.

Letter writers' personal risk estimates were predictors of inclusion of a numeric risk estimate in their letters for both book and parasite risks. But the four manipulations also played a predictive role. In both stories there is a statistically significant four-way interaction.

When it comes to including more generalized risk mentions ("the chemical is making some students sick"), three three-way interactions embroil the four manipulations as predictors for the book story, but nothing in our equation predicts to inclusion of general risk statements in letters about the parasite.

The personal level of worry of the letter writer--an affective variable--did not predict to either of the cognitive dependent variables for either story.

We do not intend to discuss the three three-way interactions that predict to general risk mentions about the book risk; they are summarized in Appendix E. But we turn your attention to Figures 6 and 7 (data displayed in Appendix D) for a brief discussion of the four-way interactions that predict to use of numeric risk estimates in the letters for both stories.

The major player in these interactions seems to be headline. Figure 6 suggests that the use of a risky headline in the book story generally increases the likelihood that a letter-writer will mention a numeric risk estimate in his/her letter, although in the nonpersonalized/high risk cell it has the opposite effect, particularly in the low severity condition. The data for the parasite story in Figure 7 are more complex, but they show that presence of a risky headline increases the likelihood of mentioning a risk estimate in one's letter for stories that contain severe symptoms, withthe exception of the combined personalized/high risk condition, where the opposite pattern prevails. When symptoms are mild, risky headline predicts to numeric risk mention only in the personalized/high risk estimate cell.

In summary, letter writers were more likely to include a quantified risk estimate in their letters if, in the case of the book story, they had encountered a risky headline and, in the case of the parasite story, the headline was paired with severe health symptoms in the story. For both stories, the greater the level of risk a letter writer perceived for herself, the more likely she was to include a numeric risk estimate in her letter. Her level of worry about the risk, on the other hand, played no role in inclusion of a specific risk estimate.

Impact of manipulations on level of worry about the risks. Table 3 indicates that the letter-writer's personal level of worry predicted to inclusion of worry statements in letters. And for the book story, the letter-writer's estimate of his likelihood of encountering the risk predicted to both statements of worry and of no worry; that was not the case for the parasite story.

Our manipulations also played roles in the inclusion of these statements in letters. The four manipulations interact to influence inclusion of worry statements for both stories, and Table 3 shows another four-way interaction for inclusion of no worry statements for the parasite story and a three-way interaction for the book story. Appendix F shows that some of the data cells for the book story/worry contain values of 0, and the likely unreliability of those data make analysis problematic. Thus, we turn our attention briefly to the other three interactions. They are illustrated in Figures 8-10 and in Appendices F and G.

Inclusion of worry sentences in the parasite story (Figure 8): Here again, headline seems to make a difference in the likelihood of inclusion of worry statements, but the effect is consistent only for stories with nonpersonalized leads. When a subject encounters a story with a personalized lead, the presence of a risky headline increases likelihood of use of worry statements only when the story contains a low risk estimate and mild symptoms or when it contains a high risk estimate and severe symptoms.

Inclusion of no worry sentences in both stories: Sentences that minimize the risk or advise letter recipients not to worry were predicted by different combinations of manipulations than were the inclusion of sentences advising letter recipients to worry about the risks.

For the book story, for example (see Figure 9 and Appendix G), level of risk is the primary predictor of the inclusion of no worry statements. That is, as the level of risk in the story goes up, the tendency of letter writers to advise their friends not to worry goes down. The opposite tendency is present in the nonpersonalized lead/nonrisky headline condition, however.

Figure 9 also makes clear that the condition that produced the greatest tendency to include no worry statements in letters was the low-risk story that contained a personalized lead and a risky headline. This may be another example of discounting. We will return to this topic in the discussion below.

For the parasite story, on the other hand (Figure 10, Appendix G), level of risk in the story does not seem to be strongly related to a writer's tendency to include no worry statements in letters. The use of a risky headline seems to drive down the use of such statements in the low risk/personalized lead condition, but patterns are not consistent in the other three cells in Figure 10.

In this case, the condition that produced the greatest tendency to include no worry statements was the low risk story with a personalized lead and a nonrisky headline.

In summary, predictors of the inclusion of worry statements and no worry statements in letters to friends seem to vary by risk story. Additionally, manipulations predicted to worry and no worry statements differentially, suggesting that these two types of affective responses may be quite different from one another.

For the book story, letter writers seemed driven largely by the level of risk in the text; the greater the level of risk the more worry statements or, conversely, the fewer no worry statements they included in their letters. That is not the case for the parasite story, however, where level of risk seems inconsequential. The use of a risky headline appears to be an important factor in subjects' tendencies to include both worry and no worry information. However, a risky headline prompts an increase in worry statements or a decrease in no worry statements under varying conditions in each case; the effect is not consistent across conditions.

Discussion

Because of the complexity of these data, we have summarized our findings within each section above. We devote this section to a discussion of what we have learned.

The model. Our content and stylistic manipulations seem to have an impact on risk appraisal in letters to friends over and above their contribution to letter writers' personal estimates of level of risk and of worry. Those impacts are rarely straightforward; were we to redraw our model to include all the significant three-way and four-way interactions, the diagram would so complex as to be unreadable. But these data do suggest that risk appraisal--at least as embodied in letters to friends--is as much a function of attributes of the risk messages as of writers' personal risk judgments.

The social amplification of risk. Content and stylistic variations in our risk stories seemed to amplify subjects' perceptions of risk in some cases and attenuate them in others. All four of our manipulations had amplifying effects at some point, although the effects were most pronounced for three. Here's a quick summary of the strongest patterns of influence of the three variables on the information provided in letters:

*A high risk estimate in either story was associated with a greater likelihood of including a numeric risk estimate in a letter.

*A high risk estimate in the book story was associated with a lesser likelihood of including statements minimizing the risk.

*The parasite stories that contained severe symptoms were associated with a greater likelihood of including a numeric risk estimate in a letter.

*The presence of a risky headline was associated in both stories with a greater likelihood of including a numeric risk estimate and, for the parasite stories, with a greater likelihood of including worry statements and, in a more limited way, with the lesser likelihood of using no worry statements.

Personalization played an erratic role in many interactions. It sometimes increased the tendency to include risk estimates or worry/no worry statements in letters and sometimes had the opposite effect.

Combinations of manipulations also seemed to attenuate responses to the risk information in the story. In particular, when information was inconsistent (for example, stylistic strategies signalled the presence of a risk but the level of risk in the story was low), effects would sometimes be in the opposite direction. Take, for example, the condition that produced the greatest tendency to reassure letter recipients that the risk of book chemicals was not problematic: the low-risk story that contained both a risky headline and a personalized lead.

But certain conditions in which the risk messages were consistent also seemed to attenuate information effects. For example, it was sometimes the case that combining severe symptoms and high risk levels with a risk frame (headline) and vividness (personalized lead) seemed to dampen worry, lessen the perceived risk.

It is not clear from the data why these reactions take place. Perhaps readers noticed inconsistencies and discounted the risk signals in the story. Or perhaps a single story can contain too many signals; overwhelmed by the signalling, a reader may discount the message. At any rate, it is clear that combinations of information factors can act to either amplify or attenuate cognitive and affective responses to risk.

Differentiating between cognitive and affective responses. As our earlier work has suggested, the data here support the contention that cognitive and affective responses to risk are conceptually distinct. Our manipulations differentially influenced not only subjects' personal risk estimates (cognitive) as opposed to worry estimates (affective) but also their likelihood of including cognitive as opposed to affective information in their letters to friends.

Making this cognitive/affective distinction is crucial, we feel, to an understanding of how information influences risk judgment.

Letter writing as a form of risk appraisal. The analysis of these data do not allow us to examine the relationship between letter writing and interpersonal talk; we have only inferred a relationship here. And since we are analyzing only a small proportion of the information in these letters, we don't feel confident yet in speaking to how individuals "make sense" of risk information they encounter and, subsequently, how they frame that information in a prescriptive way for others.

But what little we do see here is provocative. For example, the data for the book story suggest that severity of symptoms and use of a personalized lead interact to influence subjects' personal estimates of the likelihood of encountering the risk in question. That personal risk estimate, then, influences the subjects' likelihood of including a quantified risk estimate in his story to a friend about the risk. In this instance, individuals seem to be deriving their own risk estimates from information that is concrete and image-producing but that contains no estimates of likelihood of coming to harm (in fact, they seem to be bypassing the risk estimates embedded in the story itself). Then, the higher they judge their own level of risk to be, the more likely they are to provide quantified risk estimates to friends. Interestingly, they are passing on the very piece of information that they do not appear to use themselves in appraising level of risk (although the data suggest that individuals do use risk estimates to make judgments about how worried to be about the risk in the case of the parasite story).

Additionally, it is clear that subjects in this experiment did not respond similarly to the two risks presented: dipped library books and a parasite in the water supply. Throughout our analysis, the manipulations behaved in predictable ways more often for the book story than for the parasite story. For example, Table 3 shows that, while individuals' risk estimates predicted to their likelihood of including worry/no worry statements in their letters, those estimates had no impact at all on worry/no worry statements in letters about the parasite.

This leads us to speculate on the frames of reference that individuals brought to these two stories. The specifics of the stories were fabricated, so subjects could not have known about them. But we all have developed frames of reference that give meaning to terms such as "chemical" and "parasite." A brief look at the letters suggests that subjects employed very different frames to give meaning to these two risks, and we think those frames had an impact on their personal risk judgments and on the letters they wrote to friends.

For example, "parasite" seemed to activate a more worrisome set of memory patterns than did "chemicals." While a low risk of getting sick from the dipped library books seemed sufficient to prompt no-worry comments in the letters, it did not have the same impact for the parasite. Even when the risk was low, subjects seemed leery of labeling the parasite risk as trivial. A more comprehensive examination of the letters themselves will help us make sense of these differences in appraisal.

Does distinguishing between content and style make sense? In this study, we adopted a rather traditional distinction between content and style, the way in which content is framed for consumption. The results offer no support for lumping our four manipulations into those two categories. And we have begun to question their conceptual value. Style--at least the kinds of variables we selected to represent style--often involves changes in the type and amount of information made available. A personalized lead, for example, will be longer, more concrete and more visual than will a more traditional news lead. That's stylistic, but it also represents a big change in the amount and type of information made available.

It may make more sense, instead, to contrast vivid with pallid information, in the Nisbett and Ross (1980) sense. Vivid information is more concrete, more visual, and tends to be more plentiful than its pallid analog. In our study, for example, a personalized lead and severity of symptoms both might be classified as vivid, while a quantified risk estimate would be defined as pallid. And a look through our findings suggests that the lead and symptom severity influenced more of our dependent variables than did risk level, although the influence was not always in a predictable direction.

To close, there are no simple results to discuss here. A complex design has yielded some complex findings, and we will continue to explore some of the avenues opened to us in this initial analysis. Our next step will be a more thorough analysis of the letters to friends, with an eye to how our manipulations influenced both cognitive/affective information and the accuracy of the information.

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Appendix A. Summary statistics of variables in analysis.

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Min-Max	Reliability
Worry (b)	24.3	26.6	0-100	**
Worry (p)	36.7	30.9	0-100	**
Odds Est.(log)(b)	-7.6	4.4	-20.7 to 0	**
Odds Est.(log)(p)	-6.4	3.5	-20.7 to 0	**
Frequency of touching books(log)	.9	1.1	0-4.6	**
Frequency of drinking water(log)	1.4	.6	0-3.3	**
Reading time book story (60th of sec)	4582.9	1263.8	1801-11289	**
Reading time parasite story (60th of sec)	5967.5	1765.4	1426-12577	**
Believability(b)	5.1	2.2	1-9	**
Beleivability(p)	4.9	2.3	1-9	**
Story order (parasite=hi)	1.4	.5	1-2	.91
Total words (b)	86.5	29.7	29-165	.99
Total words (p)	87.4	32.3	26-191	.98
General worry (b)	.256	.31	0-3	.71
General worry (p)	.301	.53	0-3	.78
No worry (b)	.386	.62	0-3	.87
No worry (p)	.394	.65	0-3	.84
Numeric risk est. (b)	.389	.49	0-1	.96
Numeric risk est. (p)	.385	.49	0-1	.82
Gen. risk mention (b)	.776	.42	0-1	.94
Gen. risk mention (p)	.427	.49	0-1	.78

Note: b=book story; p=parasite story.

Appendix B. Mean adjusted risk and worry estimates by experimental condition (book story).

Dependent Variable: Odds Estimate

		Personalization	
		Non	Pers.
Severity	Lo	-7.79	-6.98
	Hi	-6.93	-8.29

Dependent Variable: Worry Estimate

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	17.87	17.47	24.66	28.88
	Hi	23.16	26.42	37.27	24.07

Note: N=246. Entries are cell means adjusted for covariates in the analysis. Odds estimates are scaled so that a more negative number represents less perceived risk.

Appendix C. Mean adjusted risk estimates by experimental condition (parasite story).

Dependent Variable: Odds Estimate

		Personalization	
		Non	Pers.
Severity	Lo	-6.64	-6.04
	Hi	-6.19	-7.02

		Risk Baserate	
		Low	High
Severity	Lo	-6.73	-6.02
	Hi	-7.74	-5.44

		Personalization			
		Non		Pers.	
		Risk Baserate		Risk Baserate	
		Low	High	Low	High
Headline	Non	-7.32	-5.36	-6.84	-6.53
	Risky	-7.20	-5.88	-7.59	-5.17

Note: N=246. Entries are cell means adjusted for covariates in the analysis. Odds estimates are scaled so that a more negative number represents less perceived risk.

Appendix D. Mean adjusted numeric risk mentions by experimental condition.

Book Story

Non Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.360	.458	.640	.133
	Hi	.199	.182	.273	.233

Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.465	.658	.398	.569
	Hi	.569	.646	.260	.322

Parasite Story

Non Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.258	.297	.306	.231
	Hi	.381	.798	.481	.602

Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.359	.170	.081	.542
	Hi	.441	.649	.649	.098

Note: N=246. Entries are cell mean percentages adjusted for covariates in the analysis.

Appendix E. Mean adjusted general risk mentions by experimental condition (book story).

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.780	.581	.703	.915
	Hi	.738	.785	.854	.856

		Personalization			
		Non		Pers.	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.777	.720	.708	.791
	Hi	.921	.773	.677	.864

		Personalization			
		Non		Pers.	
		Risk Baseline		Risk Baseline	
		Low	High	Low	High
Headline	Non	.905	.789	.626	.769
	Risky	.592	.893	.769	.876

Note: N=246. Entries are cell mean percentages adjusted for covariates in the analysis.

Appendix F. Mean adjusted general worry statements by experimental condition.

Parasite Story

Non Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.124	.577	.074	.243
	Hi	.043	.701	.164	.377

Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.398	.568	.457	.066
	Hi	.431	.269	.035	.339

Book Story

Non Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.263	.627	.311	.061
	Hi	.659	.022	.309	.423

Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.199	.227	.000	.268
	Hi	.000	.321	.016	.469

Note: N=246. Entries are cell means adjusted for covariates in the analysis.

Appendix G. Mean adjusted statements of general no worry by experimental condition.

Book Story

		Personalization			
		Non		Pers.	
		Risk Baseline		Risk Baseline	
		Low	High	Low	High
Headline	Non	.239	.515	.393	.205
	Risky	.448	.269	.661	.370

Parasite Story

Non Personalized

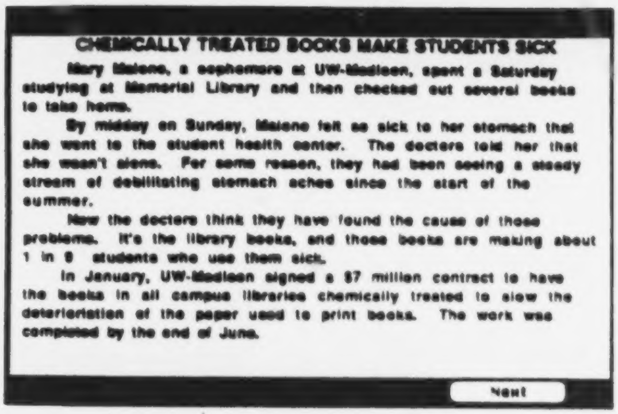
		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.452	.366	.361	.661
	Hi	.148	.465	.412	.276

Personalized

		Risk Baserate			
		Low		High	
		Headline		Headline	
		Non-Risky	Risky	Non-Risky	Risky
Severity	Lo	.766	.458	.475	.311
	Hi	.638	.217	.157	.220

Note: N=246. Entries are cell means adjusted for covariates in the analysis.

Appendix H. Samples of book and parasite stories



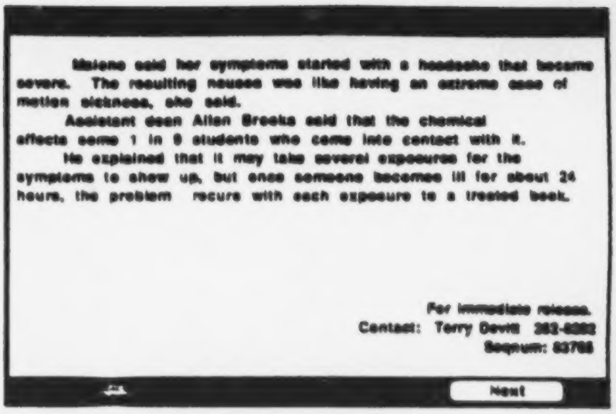
CHEMICALLY TREATED BOOKS MAKE STUDENTS SICK

Mary Malone, a sophomore at UW-Madison, spent a Saturday studying at Memorial Library and then checked out several books to take home.

By midday on Sunday, Malone felt so sick to her stomach that she went to the student health center. The doctors told her that she wasn't alone. For some reason, they had been seeing a steady stream of debilitating stomach aches since the start of the summer.

Now the doctors think they have found the cause of those problems. It's the library books, and those books are making about 1 in 9 students who use them sick.

In January, UW-Madison signed a $7 million contract to have the books in all campus libraries chemically treated to slow the deterioriation of the paper used to print books. The work was completed by the end of June.

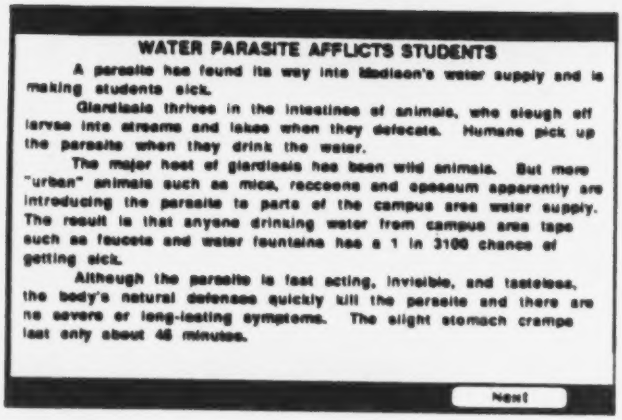


Malone said her symptoms started with a headache that became severe. The resulting nausea was like having an extreme case of motion sickness, she said.

Assistant dean Allen Brooks said that the chemical affects some 1 in 9 students who come into contact with it.

He explained that it may take several exposures for the symptoms to show up, but once someone becomes ill for about 24 hours, the problem recurs with each exposure to a treated book.

For immediate release.
Contact: Terry Devitt 262-8282
Seqnum: 83768



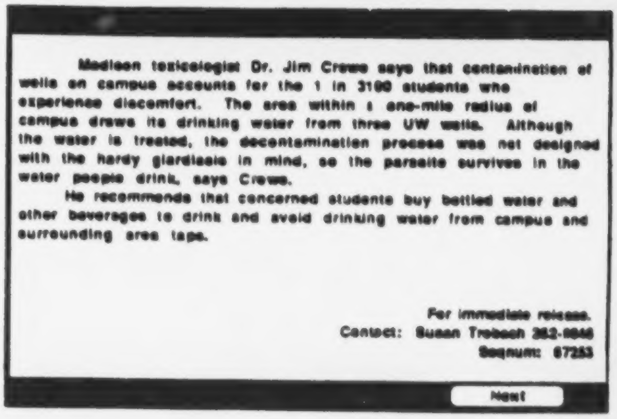
WATER PARASITE AFFLICTS STUDENTS

A parasite has found its way into Madison's water supply and is making students sick.

Giardiasis thrives in the intestines of animals, who slough off larvae into streams and lakes when they defecate. Humans pick up the parasite when they drink the water.

The major host of giardiasis has been wild animals. But more "urban" animals such as mice, raccoons and opossum apparently are introducing the parasite to parts of the campus area water supply. The result is that anyone drinking water from campus area taps such as faucets and water fountains has a 1 in 3100 chance of getting sick.

Although the parasite is fast acting, invisible, and tasteless, the body's natural defenses quickly kill the parasite and there are no severe or long-lasting symptoms. The slight stomach cramps last only about 45 minutes.



Madison toxicologist Dr. Jim Crowe says that contamination of wells on campus accounts for the 1 in 3100 students who experience discomfort. The area within a one-mile radius of campus draws its drinking water from three UW wells. Although the water is treated, the decontamination process was not designed with the hardy giardiasis in mind, so the parasite survives in the water people drink, says Crowe.

He recommends that concerned students buy bottled water and other beverages to drink and avoid drinking water from campus and surrounding area taps.

For immediate release.
Contact: Susan Trebach 262-8646
Seqnum: 67253

Table 1. Predictors of Risk and Worry Estimates for Book and Parasite Stories.

	Book Story		Parasite Story	
	Risk Estimate	Worry Estimate	Risk Estimate	Worry Estimate
Covariates				
Story Order	-.08	.02	.04	-.05
Reading Time	-.03	-.05	.02	-.02
Total Words	.02	.13*	.03	.13
Freq. Touch Books/ Drink Water	.11	.02	.00	-.02
Believability	-.09	-.02	-.17*	-.11
Main Effects				
Severity (S)	.01	.14*	.01	.17*
Headline (H)	-.09	-.04	.02	.01
Baserate (B)	.24*	.18*	.34*	.22*
Personalization (P)	-.04	.01	.00	.07
Interactions				
SxH	.03	-.09	-.03	.08
SxB	-.03	-.03	.16*	.01
SxP	-.19*	.00	-.16*	-.07
HxB	-.09	-.07	.05	-.06
HxP	-.03	.01	.07	.08
BxP	.00	-.04	-.02	.03
SxHxB	.12	-.13*	.02	.03
SxBxP	.07	-.07	.11	.01
SxHxP	-.08	.11	.01	.01
HxBxP	-.02	.01	.14*	.07
SxHxBxP	.09	-.02	.00	.03
Phi Risk/Worry	.36*		.20*	
R^2 for Equation	.18	.27	.24	.23
Coefficient of Determination	.29		.34	

Note: N=246. Unless otherwise noted, table entries are Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimates. An asterisk (*) indicates that a coefficient is at least twice its standard error. Only highest order interaction(s) serves as basis for interpretation.

Table 2. Predictors of Numeric and General Risk Mentions for Book and Parasite Stories.

	Book Story		Parasite Story	
	Numeric Risk Mention	General Risk Mention	Numeric Risk Mention	General Risk Mention
Covariates				
Story Order	-.06	.04	-.01	-.06
Reading Time	-.04	.03	.07	-.06
Total Words	.07	.20*	.09	.11
Freq. Touch Books/ Drink Water	.00	.00	-.05	-.01
Believability	.06	.05	.05	-.06
Main Effects				
Severity (S)	-.22*	.14*	.38*	.10
Headline (H)	.01	.02	.08	.01
Baserate (B)	-.15*	.24*	-.09	-.13
Personalization (P)	.28*	-.08	-.07	-.11
Interactions				
SxH	.02	.00	.00	-.05
SxB	-.06	-.03	-.10*	.09
SxP	.10	-.09	-.09	-.05
HxB	-.13*	.19*	-.11*	.04
HxP	.21*	.24*	-.12*	-.01
BxP	-.18*	.03	-.02	-.07
SxHxB	.12*	-.24*	-.31*	-.03
SxBxP	-.13*	.04	-.08	-.11
SxHxP	-.12*	.12*	-.25*	.02
HxBxP	.12*	-.22*	.06	-.06
SxHxBxP	-.13*	.01	-.25*	.08
Intervening Variables				
Risk Estimate	.22*	-.02	.14*	-.14
Worry Estimate	-.02	-.11	-.01	.10
R^2 for Equation	.35	.34	.47	.12
Coefficient of Determination	.52	.53	.65	.41

Note: N=246. Unless otherwise noted, table entries are Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimates. An asterisk (*) indicates that a coefficient is at least twice its standard error. Only highest order interaction(s) serves as basis for interpretation.

Table 3. Predictors of Expressing Worry and No Worry about Book and Parasite Stories.

	Book Story		Parasite Story	
	Worry	No Worry	Worry	No Worry
Covariates				
Story Order	-.14*	-.12*	-.09	.14*
Reading Time	-.01	.00	-.02	-.06
Total Words	.23*	.37*	.19*	.17*
Freq. Touch Books/ Drink Water	-.06	.08	.13*	.02
Believability	.03	.06	-.07	-.02
Main Effects				
Severity (S)	.04	-.23*	-.02	-.23*
Headline (H)	.16*	.12*	.26*	-.07
Baserate (B)	-.09*	-.13*	-.27*	-.11
Personalization (P)	-.26*	.06	.07	.03
Interactions				
SxH	-.06	-.04	.13*	.00
SxB	.22*	-.04	.06	-.05
SxP	-.01	-.04	-.12*	-.02
HxB	.11*	-.17*	-.14*	.09
HxP	.33*	.18*	-.33*	-.18*
BxP	.05	-.20*	-.05	-.19*
SxHxB	.26*	-.02	.18*	-.07
SxBxP	-.08	-.05	-.02	.01
SxHxP	.22*	.03	.05	.03
HxBxP	.08	.11*	.13*	.09
SxHxBxP	-.33*	-.09	.24*	.16*
Intervening Variables				
Risk Estimate	.28*	-.17*	.09	-.02
Worry Estimate	.16*	-.06	.14*	-.03
R^2 for Equation	.59	.33	.42	.24
Coefficient of Determination	.69	.49	.61	.50

Note: N=246. Unless otherwise noted, table entries are Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimates. An asterisk (*) indicates that a coefficient is at least twice its standard error. Only highest order interaction(s) serves as basis for interpretation.

FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF EXPERIMENT.

EXPERIMENTAL FACTORS

- A. STYLISTIC STRATEGIES
  - 1. HEADLINE TYPE
  - 2. PERSONALIZATION
- B. CONTENT
  - 1. OUTCOME SEVERITY
  - 2. RISK BASERATE

INTERVENING VARIABLES

- A. RISK ESTIMATES
- B. WORRY ESTIMATES

APPRAISAL OUTCOMES

VERBAL MENTIONS OF:

- A. COGNITIVE
  - 1. NUMERIC RISK
  - 2. GENERAL RISK
- B. AFFECTIVE
  - 1. WORRY
  - 2. NO WORRY

FIGURE 2. ODDS ESTIMATE BY SEVERITY AND PERSONALIZATION (BOOK STORY).

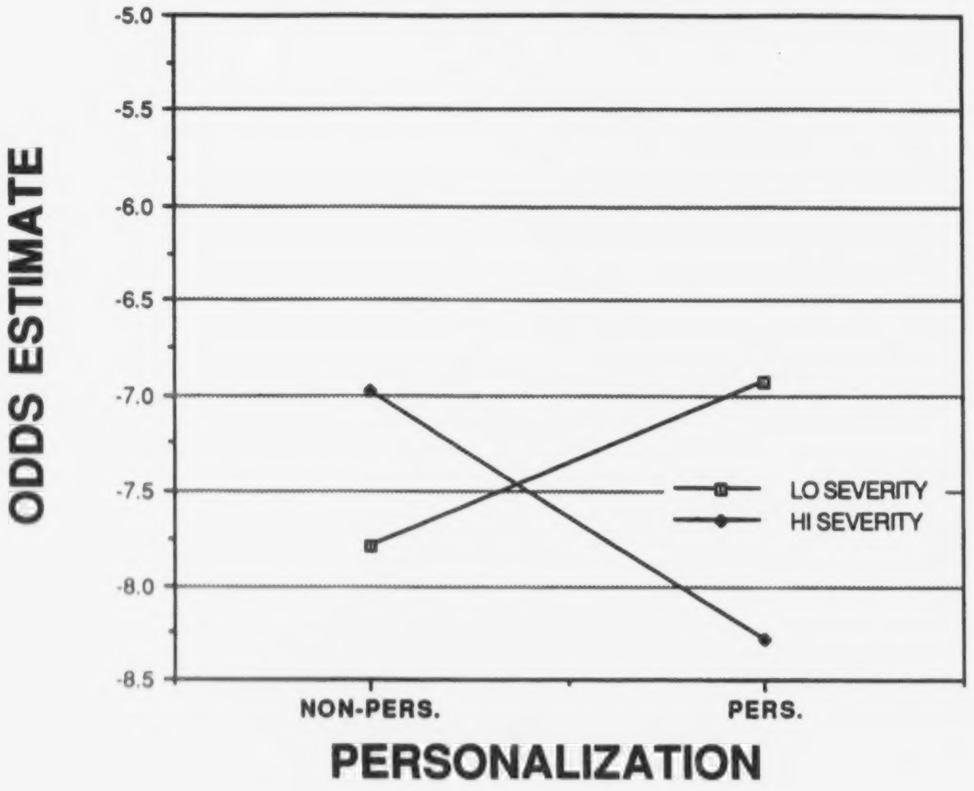


FIGURE 3. WORRY ESTIMATE BY SEVERITY BY BASERATE (BOOK STORY).

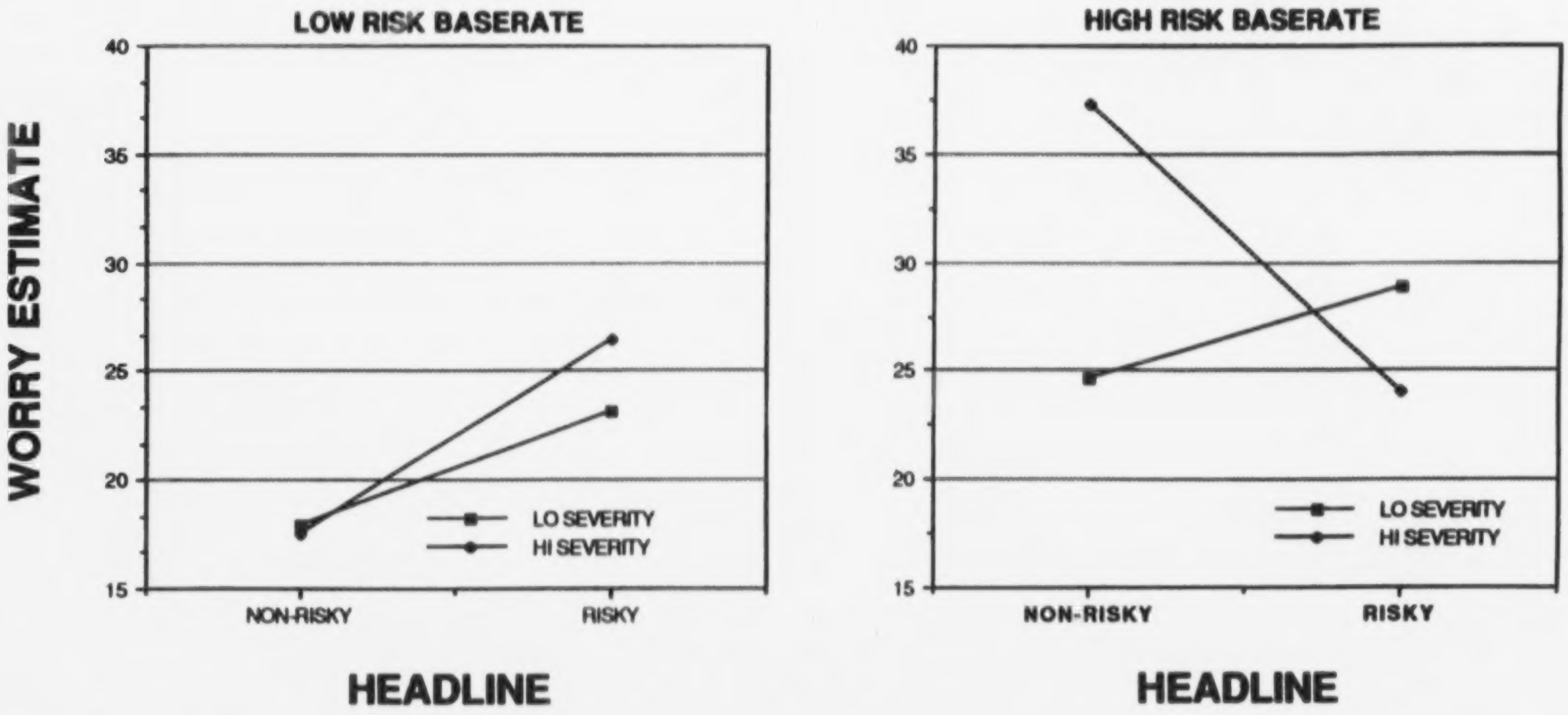


FIGURE 4. ODDS ESTIMATE BY SEVERITY BY PERSONALIZATION AND BY RISK BASERATE (PARASITE STORY).

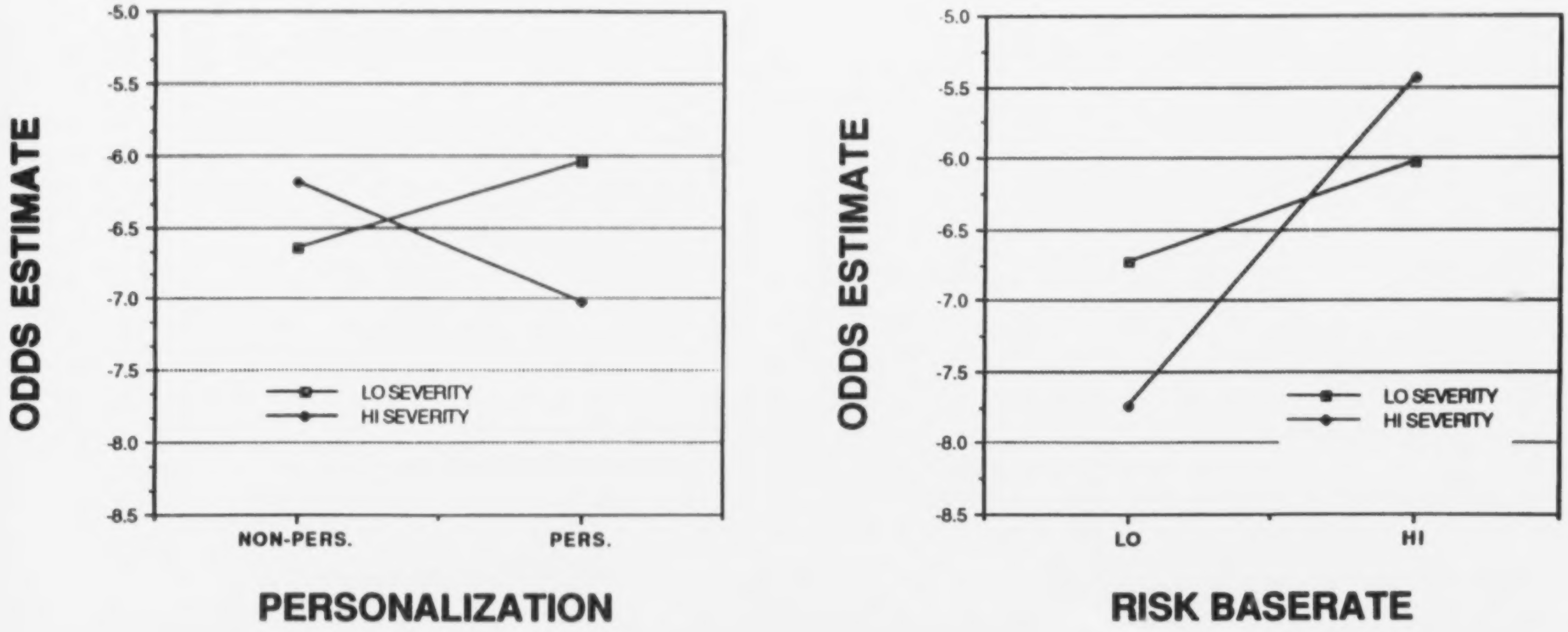


FIGURE 5. ODDS ESTIMATE BY PERSONALIZATION (PARASITE STORY).

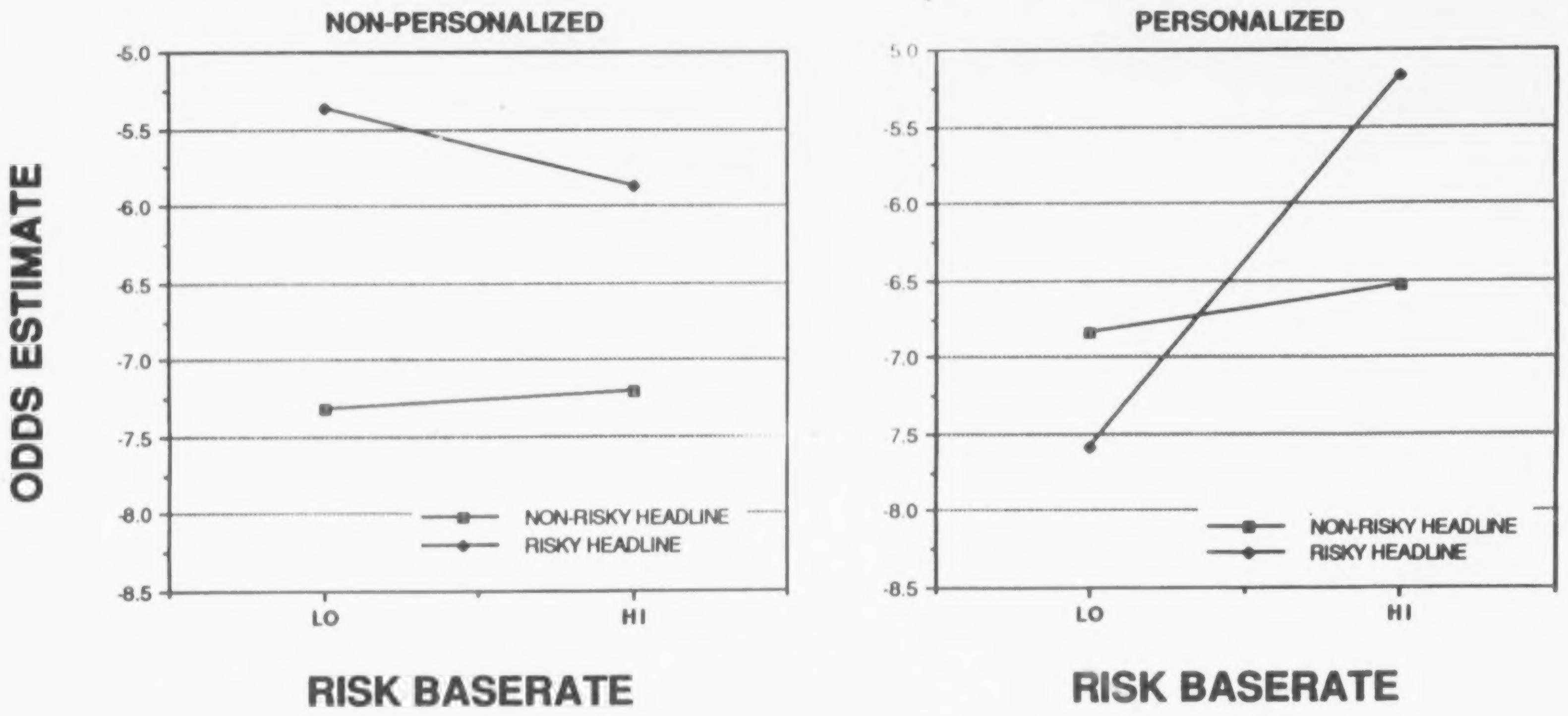


FIGURE 6. NUMERIC RISK MENTIONS BY SEVERITY BY HEADLINE BY BASERATE BY PERSONALIZATION (BOOK STORY).

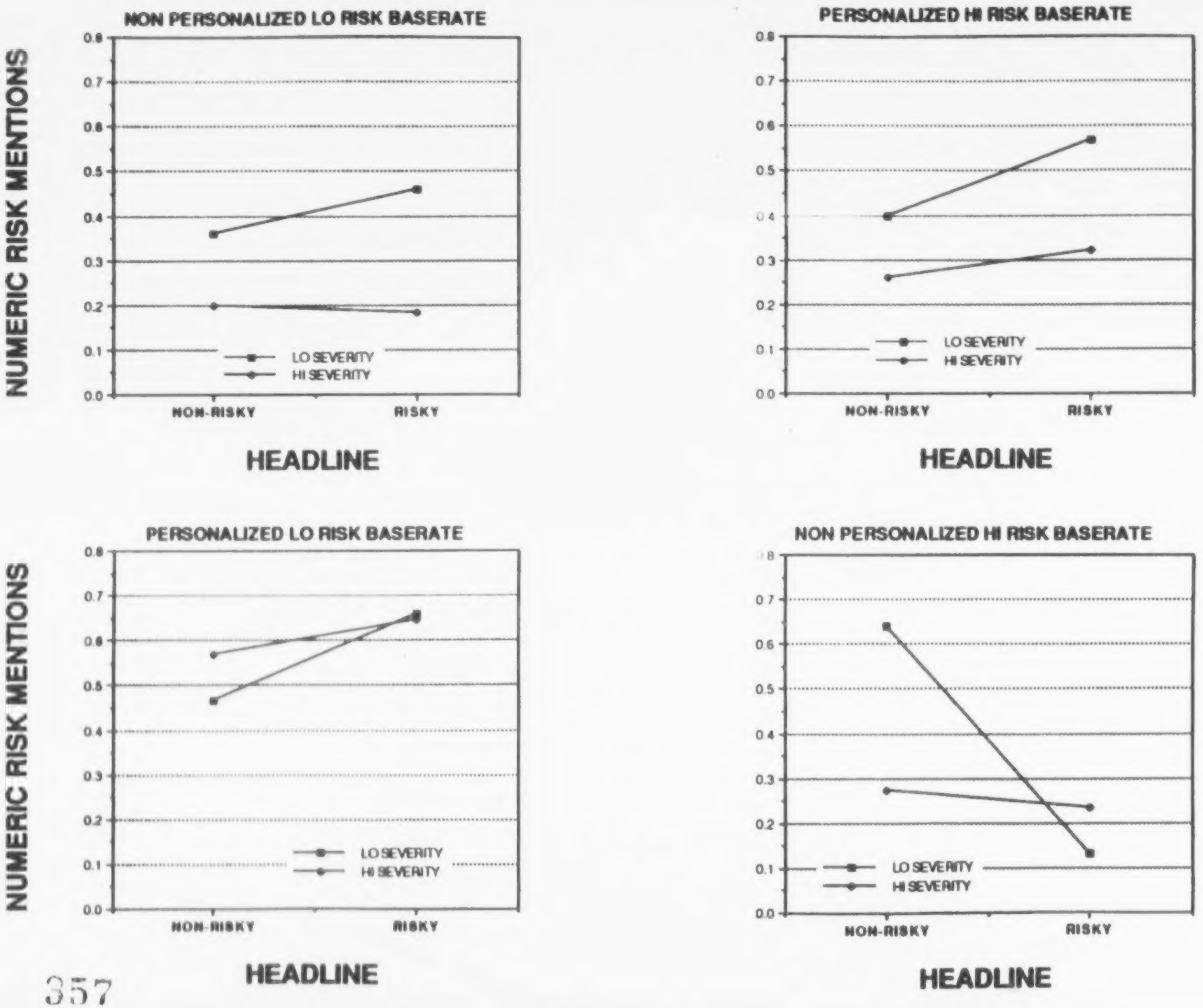


FIGURE 7. NUMERIC RISK MENTIONS BY SEVERITY BY HEADLINE BY BASERATE BY PERSONALIZATION (PARASITE STORY).

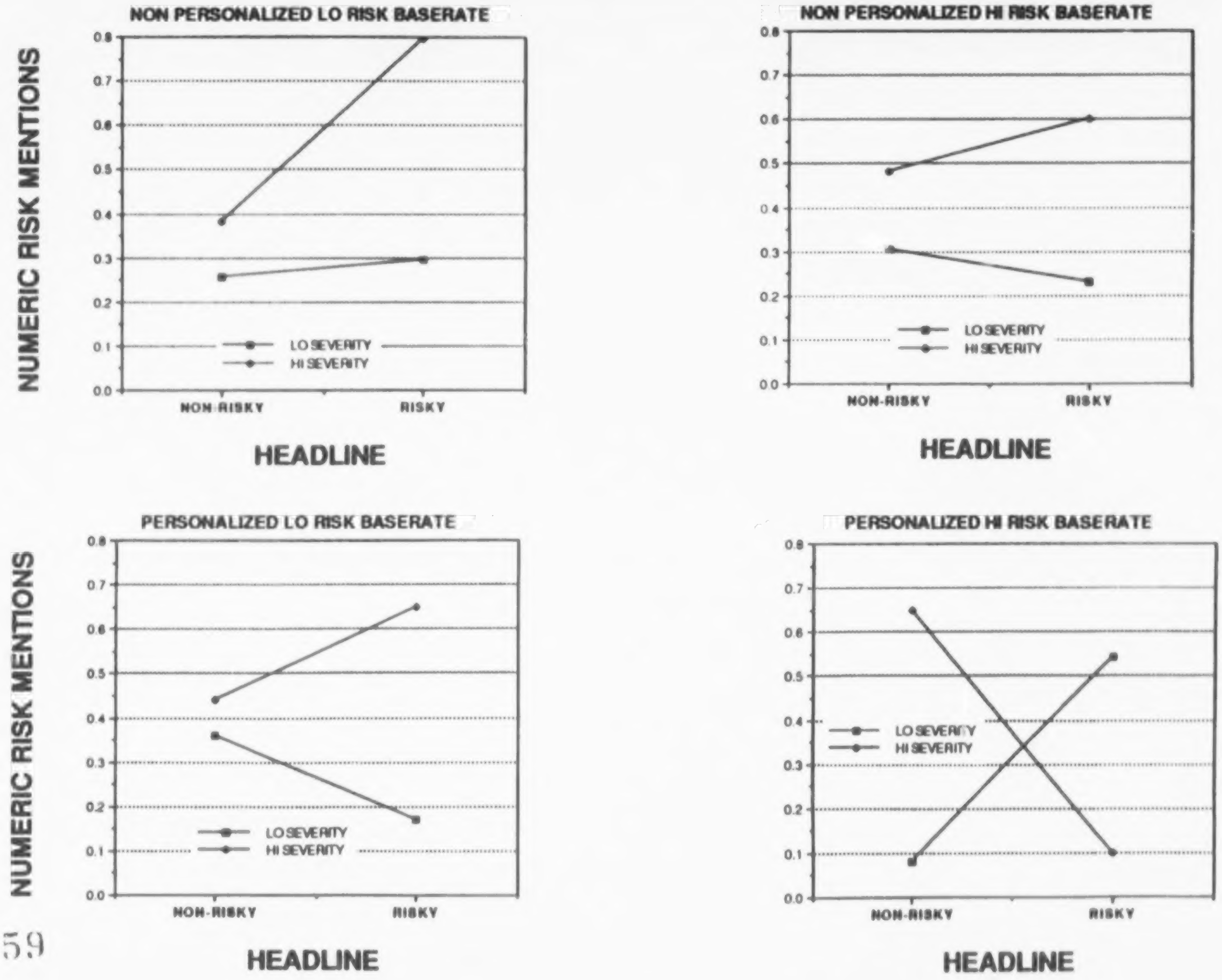


FIGURE 8. GENERAL WORRY MENTIONS BY SEVERITY BY HEADLINE BY BASERATE BY PERSONALIZATION (PARASITE STORY).

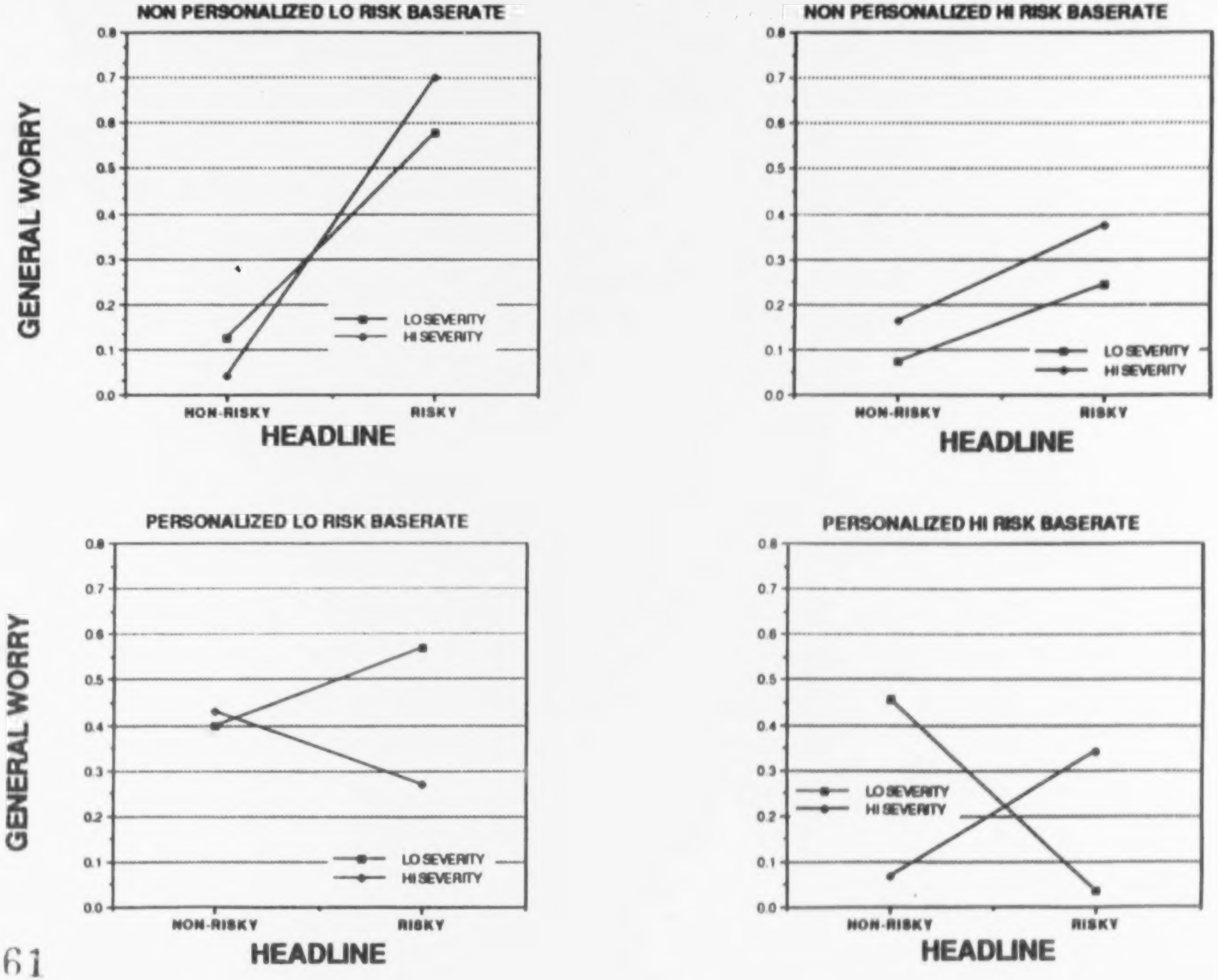


FIGURE 9. NO WORRY STATEMENTS BY HEADLINE BY BASERATE BY PERSONALIZATION (BOOK STORY).

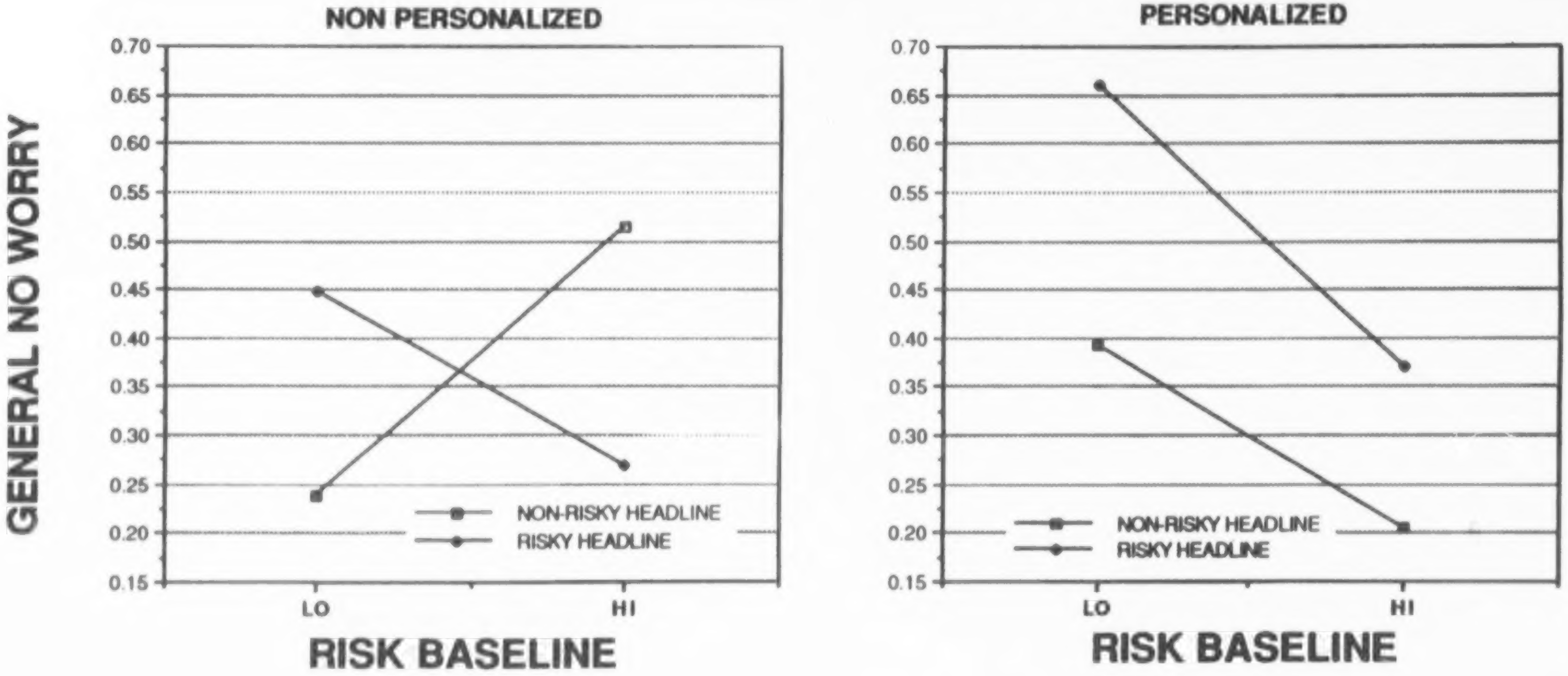
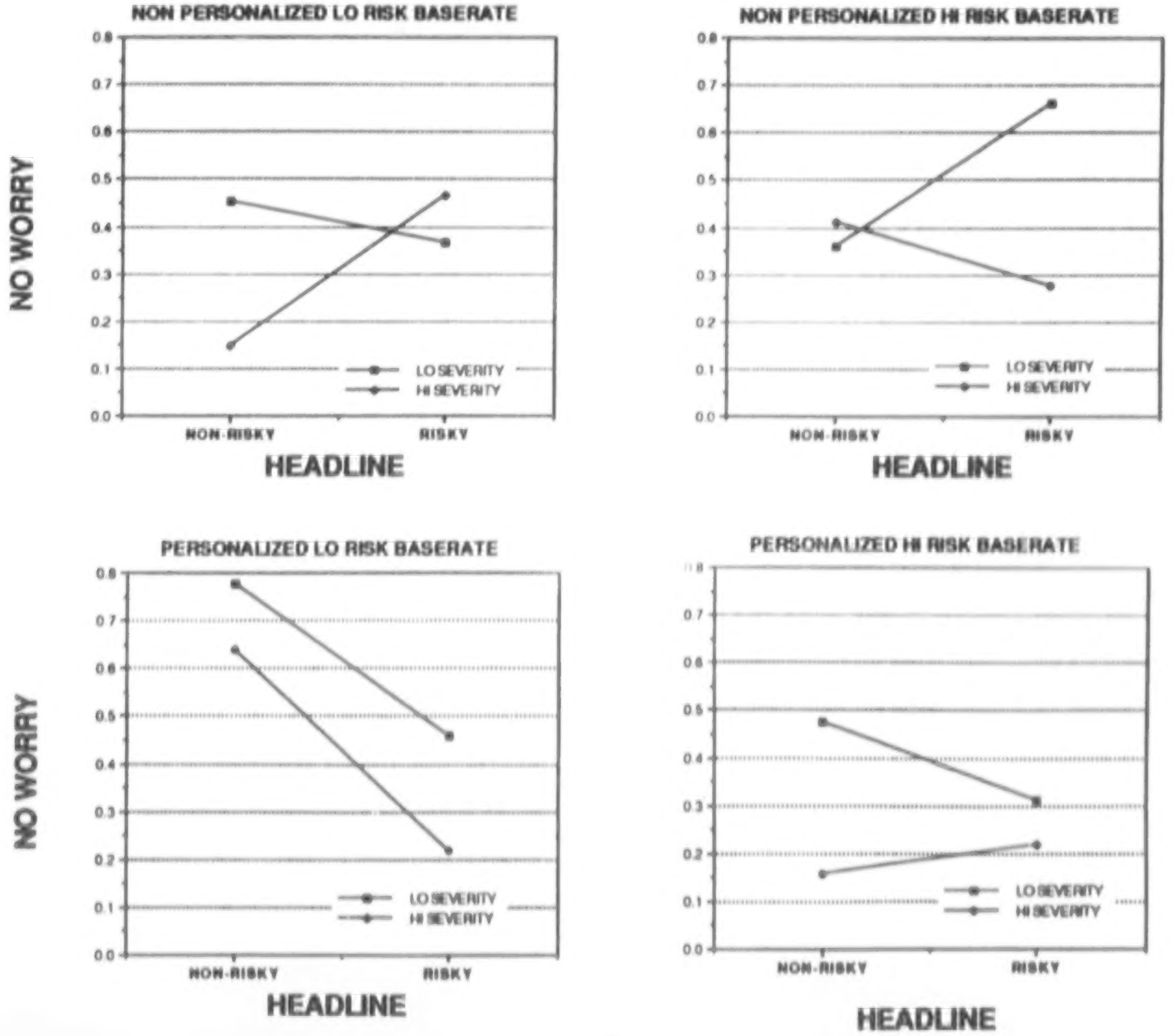


FIGURE 10. NO WORRY STATEMENTS BY SEVERITY BY HEADLINE BY BASERATE BY PERSONALIZATION (PARASITE STORY).



The Construction of Interpretive Communities and Uses and Gratifications in Letters to the Editor

by

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Presented to:
The Qualitative Studies Division of the Association
for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
1990 AEJMC Annual Convention, Minneapolis, MN

Introduction

Scholars have used several hypotheses in research focusing on newspaper letters to the editor. The nearly universal letters-to-the-editor column primarily functions, of course, to maintain a marketplace of ideas. The marketplace of ideas concept is a centuries-old libertarian tradition that is considered an essential component for the maintenance of an open and free democratic society. Accordingly, then, it is supposed that letters-to-the-editor columns help stimulate public debate and discussion on public issues.

Letters-to-the-editor columns appear to have additional functions. Scholarly inquiry indicates that letters to the editor have uses for readers that dovetail nicely with the theoretical approach known as uses and gratifications (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). For example, research shows that letters to the editor can serve a catharsis function (see, for instance, Davis and Rarick, 1964). In other words, they can serve as a societal safety relief valve. Scholars have also demonstrated that letters-to-the-editor columns can function as a means for social integration and conflict resolution (see, for example, Chu and Chu, 1981).

In research based on adherence to the premises of the traditional objective/subjective paradigm, investigators have attempted to determine if letters-to-the-editor columns function as a mirror for public opinion (see, for example, Buell, 1975).

This paper reports the results of a study that focused on the various hypotheses used to explain the functions of letters to the editor. The study results, in addition, indicated that an additional hypothesis can be used to explain their function, a hypothesis derived from the notion that societies are composed of discrete interpretive communities (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Rafoth, 1988).

Review of the Literature

The following discussion examines letters-to-the-editor studies and the several hypotheses that have been adduced to explain their functions. For the purposes of the study reported here, the review will focus on studies that propose, confirm, or disconfirm hypotheses having to do with catharsis, conflict resolution, social integration, and newspaper bias. The former three hypotheses are derivatives of uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974).

The Catharsis Hypothesis

Davis and Rarick (1964) found that letters to the editor give "the irate, the antagonist, the displeased a chance to speak out and be heard." In their assessment of editorial and reader comment on a local controversy, Davis and Rarick concluded that letters-to-the-editor columns function as instruments of persuasion but also function as a safety valve for the political system by giving writers an opportunity for catharsis (see also Forsythe, 1950).

In a follow-up study, Lander (1972) found that the catharsis or social-safety-valve hypothesis does not explain all letters to the editor. He based his conclusion on an examination of letters to newspapers that were published after four Kent State University students were killed by National Guardsmen in 1970. Most of the letters he analyzed expressed intense hostility toward students or youth and 6 percent of his sample openly approved the killings. He concluded that the "response was not a harmless safety valve by emotional citizens. The open approval of the killings could encourage law enforcement officials to over respond in future encounters."

In summary then, the catharsis hypothesis involves the following: Letters to the editor serve as a harmless outlet for tensions, frustrations, and other negative feelings that might otherwise become manifested in antisocial, harmful behaviors.

The Conflict Resolution Hypothesis

Chu and Chu (1981) found that letters columns can serve as a mechanism for conflict resolution. Basing their arguments on a content analysis of letters found in the People's Daily, the official organ of the People's Republic of China, Chu and Chu concluded that letters function cathartically as a safety valve and also function as an institutionalized means for addressing conflict and resolving it.

The hypothesis, then, could be stated thusly: Letters to the editor are an institutionalized tool for the management, negotiation, and resolution of conflict.

The Social Integration Hypothesis

Chu and Chu (1981) also concluded that letters to the editor help facilitate social integration. They noted that:

> The practice of writing letters to air grievances and resolve conflicts reveals a traditional inadequacy of the Chinese social system, that is, the reliance on renzhi (personalized rule) instead of institutionalized rule. In the past, when a person had a major grievance for which he could find no reparation because no yamen office would bother, he would seek an official of rare integrity,

> usually by waylaying him, to present his case. . . . The most extreme case would be for the person to lie in wait for the emperor to catch his royal attention -- a favorite fantasy in traditional Chinese novels known as gao yu zhuang. The very popularity of these tales bespeaks of a yearning for some institutionalized mechanisms by which grievances can be heard and conflicts resolved. The letters to the editor column in the People's Daily has gone a long way toward fulfilling this yearning. In this sense it is an essential mechanism of societal integration in China. (Chu & Chu, 1981)

Therefore, according to the social integrations hypothesis, letters columns can assuage alienation and foster social integration by providing a forum for the resolution of conflict.

The Newspaper Bias Hypothesis

A number of studies attempt to determine whether letters to the editor are used to promote publishers' or editors' social, political, or professional agendas and if letter writers are representative of the general population. In other words, the studies attempt to discover if letters columns are what they theoretically should be: a mirror of public opinion. Results vary in studies that attempt to verify this potential explanation, known as the newspaper bias hypothesis.

Scholars generally dismiss the notion that letters to the editor mirror public opinion. This is due to well-documented findings that letter-to-the-editor writers are nonrepresentative of the general population. Letter writers are usually older, wealthier, more widely read, and have more years of education than members of the general population (Buell, 1975). Other researchers have found that letter writers are usually polarized on political issues and typically espouse conservative ideologies (Converse, et al., 1965; Rosenberg, et al., 1970; Verba and Brody, 1970).

Hill (1981), however, found no bias in his study. Using a nationwide sample of 92 newspapers, Hill compared letter-to-the-editor opinions on the proposed Equal Rights Amendment with national poll results on the same issue. "Little support is found for the hypothesis that newspaper policies bias letter opinion," he concluded.

However, a 1970 study by Grey and Brown demonstrates that letters to the editor are more likely to reveal the nature of the gatekeepers than accurately reflect public opinion. They note that, "Since most of the 30 years research on letters to the editor has been based on only those published, it may be that the profile which has emerged reflects less the writers themselves than the selection of editors. A broader but largely invisible cross-section of Americans may have been writing for some time; theirs may be the inarticulate, sometimes abusive letters screened from print."

Renfro (1979) took a cue from Grey and Brown. In her case study comparison of letters actually received with those that found their way into print, she discovered that some topics are more likely than others to be included in a letters-to-the-editor column. Her results, then, tend to confirm the bias hypothesis.

The newspaper bias hypothesis can be summarized in the following manner: Letters to the editor mirror public opinion. If they do not, it is either because editors use them to promote their social/political agendas or because letter writers are not representative of the general population.

An Additional Hypothesis

In addition to the four hypotheses mentioned above, the study reported here also tested another hypothesis, a hypothesis that is derived from current thinking regarding the nature of interpretation and the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Rafoth. 1988). The hypothesis is:

> Letters-to-the-editor columns are a site for the construction and maintenance of reality. The material that appears in them expresses and affirms the values of the readership interpretive community, maintains the community, and serves as a forum for the offering of explanations for ambiguous circumstances in a way that reaffirms the central values of the community.

Research Methodology

The study reported below utilized two approaches, informal conversational interviewing and value analysis.

Informal Conversational Interviewing

According to Patton, an informal approach to interviewing is appropriate when the researcher has no presumptions about what might by learned through talking with people (1980, p. 198) (see also Geertz, 1973; and Nelson, 1987). Two local newspaper editors were interviewed for this project, Hal Knight, who writes editorials and handles letters to the editor for the Deseret News in Salt Lake City, and Wallace Hoffman, public forum editor and editorial writer for the Salt Lake Tribune. Open-ended questions were used by the interviewer to evoke thought and responses and to provide continuity. The respondents were forewarned that the interviews were undirected. They were told that they had freedom to say what they liked and were comfortable with.

Value Analysis

A number of investigators have found it useful to base their analyses on value statements (for example, see Trujillo & Ekdom, 1985; and Cheesebro, 1986). The analysis of values can help us understand a culture through the identification of its premises. The approach assumes that culture is manifested in communicative texts. The approach furthermore assumes that values are central in our lives. Humans rely on a cognitive value system to "attach various degrees of importance to every thing, person or idea with which we come in contact" (Sillars, 1988). Values, defined here as "general concepts of the good and the bad," can be derived from statements examined with the following questions in mind:

1) "What specific words are used which directly state values?"
2) "What specific words are used which state the negative aspects of values?"
3) "What values are implied by belief statements which do not use specific value terms?"
4) "What values are implied by the formal elements used?" (Sillars, 1988)

The identification of its various values allows an analyst to reconstruct a culture's value system. The system of values, in turn, can be used as the basis for general statements about the culture of the individual(s) who generated the text.

Research Approach

The researcher was interested initially in the mass media interface with interpersonal communication. A concern with print media and public access to mass-mediated communication forums led to a review of the literature concerned with letters to the editor. The review of research (and associated cogitations relating to the hypothetical and partially verified functions of letters to the editor) led to the following reasoning: It might be possible to test all the letters-to-the-editor function hypotheses outlined above in one study if it could be devised to answer this question:

> Do newspapers and their readers use the letters-to-the-editor interface point to define, create, and maintain their own subculture or interpretive community?

To begin with, one could posit the following: In a two-newspaper city, the respective differences between the newspapers' readers should be minimal or nonexistent. This question, then, was asked: Would a comparative analysis of letters reveal differences, for instance, between those who write letters for publication to the newspapers published in the researcher's home city, the Deseret News and the Salt Lake Tribune? If a significant difference could be found, one would have grounds for arguing that the newspapers and their readers have formed distinct subcultures with differing norms, expectations, and values. On the other hand, if no important differences were found, that too would have significance vis a vis the four hypotheses.

For example, confirmation of a difference could demonstrate the explanatory power of the catharsis and conflict resolution hypotheses if the study focuses on a salient issue that involves societal conflict (in this connection it is worth noting scholars have observed that cultural characteristics are revealed and brought into sharp relief during periods of conflict).

Confirmation of a difference could also demonstrate the explanatory power of the social integration and newspaper bias hypotheses. The former would be confirmed because an argument could be set forth that the discrete subcultures (or interpretive communities) serve as social integrative mechanisms for those who wish to join and for those who wish to enhance and improve their membership standing by becoming more informed about the culture. The latter hypothesis would be disconfirmed because the finding would discount a premise strongly implied by the newspaper bias hypothesis: No differences should occur when letters to the editor are compared from two dailies serving the same community.

These observations evolved into a textual analysis study that compared the two Salt Lake City newspapers' letters to the editor written during and after the 1988 Singer siege in northeastern Utah -- a tragic conflict between a polygamous clan and the law that received national attention. As previously mentioned, the editors who handle letters to the editor at the cities' newspapers were interviewed to ferret out additional information that might enhance or disconfirm the textual analysis findings. The following section reports the editors' remarks.

The Interviews

The interview sessions revealed several relevant items of interest. Both editors indicated that they follow policies that are identical in most respects. Both paper's letters-to-the-editors columns are intended to serve as open forums to facilitate a healthy marketplace of ideas and to stimulate public debate on issues.

For the purposes of this study, the most significant difference in the two newspapers is the fact that the Deseret News runs more letters and attempts to run every letter received that is of interest to readers and not libelous, tasteless, or the product of someone who is obviously demented. The Salt Lake Tribune adheres to similar standards regarding libel, etc., but runs fewer total letters per day and about 40 percent of those received. According to the Tribune editor, the letters published are representative of those received. The Tribune does not run "me too" letters that merely restate opinions contained in letters already published. The writers "got to come up with something new" before the Tribune will run their missives, he said. The differing policies of the papers regarding percentage run of total number of letters received becomes more understandable if their circulations are compared: The Deseret News has a daily circulation of 60,021 while the Salt Lake Tribune's is 107,773 (Velez, 1988). Thus it can be assumed that the latter paper receives more letters.

Locals generally agree that the Deseret News is more conservative in its editorials and selection of opinion columns. The Tribune editor said his paper attempts to provide for readers all aspects of the liberal/conservative spectrum, and the editorials that appear are generally more liberal than those found in the Deseret News.

Both editors agreed that a comparison of the letters columns would reveal a population of writers that is identical for both publications. They also agreed that there is little difference in the readership of the two papers. Surveys, they said, indicate that the readership of the

Deseret News is slightly older and slightly more Mormon. There is little crossover in subscriptions to the two papers; about 7 percent of the readers subscribe to both. Surveys also reveal that readers express no preference for one paper over another. For the most part, they subscribe because they prefer either an a.m. or p.m. newspaper. (It should be noted that the papers have a Joint Operating Agreement; they utilize the same printing and business staff and facilities but conduct separate editorial operations.)

The Deseret News is owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon). This fact introduced special difficulties for the study. Any biasing effect, however, is obviated by the paper's policies relating to its Mormon ownership vis a vis letters to the editor. The letters editor for the Deseret News explained that a new publisher came on board several years ago. He did not want to run letters critical of the church's general authorities or policies. The letters editor said the new publisher was finally persuaded that the Deseret News has a special obligation to run letters criticizing the church. The paper's letters-to-the-editor policy is grounded in the marketplace of ideas notion; it would be inconsistent with that grounding if the paper had rules or stipulations in effect that would impose the paper's editorial point of view on letter writers, the editor said. It was a Mormon organ when it was founded in the middle of the last century, he noted, and so it is difficult for church members to understand it is not a church organ now.

Both editors noted that letter length is a continuing problem because of space limitations. Many -- at least a majority -- of the letters that appear in both papers are edited to remove superfluous, redundant textual material and grammatical and other errors that would embarrass writers. The editors said in their judgment they preserve writers' opinions and the gist of their arguments. Both, however, said they frequently receive complaints from writers that "the heart was cut out."

As a final note, it seems significant in terms of longitudinal perspective and credibility to add that Hal Knight of the Deseret News is in his thirty-third year at the paper and seventh year in his present position. Wallace Hoffman of the Salt Lake Tribune has worked at the paper since 1957 and has held his current position for sixteen years (Knight, 1989; Hoffman; 1989).

The Singer Siege

As noted above, the study focused on letters to the editor that appeared during and after the so-called Singer siege. The siege provoked an emotional, heated controversy in Utah that laid bare several facets of the local culture.

The siege took place over a thirteen-day period during the last half of January 1988. The conflict between the Singer clan and law enforcement authorities was rooted partly in the death of John Singer, a polygamous patriarch from rural northeastern Utah who found himself at odds with Mormon and secular authorities on several counts. Among other things, the confrontations involved Mr. Singer's right to home school his children and custody of a wife's children who were the offspring of an earlier marriage. The roots, of course, go deeper and back much further than Mr. Singer's death in 1979.

The late patriarch's belief in polygamy apparently stemmed from an early tradition of the Mormon Church. Polygamy was outlawed in Utah in 1890, and the church subsequently excommunicated those who continued the practice. At that time, numerous polygamous clans formed that persist to this day -- a fact that receives little public attention, probably due to the problem's extensiveness, intractability, and embarrassment for the state. Singer was excommunicated from the church for advocating polygamy. His was killed after allegedly pointing a gun at police officers who were trying to arrest him for refusing to enroll his children in public school (New York Times, 1988, p. 17).

The 1988 conflict involved a church bombing, an extended siege of the clan's northeastern Utah ranch compound by more than 150 law enforcement officials, and ended with the death of an officer and the surrender of the clan. Addam Swapp, the heir apparent of John Singer and husband of two of his daughters, and Vickie Singer, the patriarch's widow, were wanted for questioning in connection with an early morning bombing of a Mormon chapel near the Singer ranch. A spear was found in the ground outside the bombed chapel with a note bearing the name of the late polygamist and the date of his death.

Officers surrounded the compound immediately after the bombing and Mrs. Singer, Mr. Swapp, and 12 others refused to surrender. Mrs. Singer told a Salt Lake City newspaper on the day the siege began that the church explosion was "symbolic of what is coming. There will be a collapse of the church, state, and nation." The clan members, in addition, expected the resurrection of John Singer several days after the siege began, and declared their ranch and people an "independent and free nation."

Law enforcement officials attempted to end the siege peacefully through negotiation and other strategies, but it came to an unfortunate conclusion when law officer Fred House was killed and Mr. Swapp was wounded in the arm and chest (New York Times, 1988, p. A10).

The Analysis

The results of the value analysis are summarized in Table 1 and Appendix A. The analysis is based on all letters addressing the Singer siege that appeared in both newspapers from the beginning of the siege until February 29, 1988 -- a period of about six weeks. Thirty-five letters appeared in the Deseret News during that period and fifteen in the Salt Lake Tribune. The thirty-five letters appearing in the News constituted 15.8 percent of the total number (222) that appeared during the period under investigation. The fifteen that appeared in the Tribune constituted 9.5 percent of the total number (158).

Because the analysis was inductively oriented, the information that was considered significant emerged during the course of the researcher's immersion in the texts (see Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Inductive research, of course, must proceed in this manner because no (or as few as possible) a priori assumptions are made before the textual material is examined. During the researcher's analysis of the letters, certain

Table 1

Values	Total #	% of letters
Deseret News: (N = 35; total = 222; % = 15.8)		
Understanding	28	80
Fixing responsibility	26	74
State/outsiders	8	23
Clan	16	46
Law and order	15	43
Freedom from outside interference	6	17
Justice	4	11
Fairness	3	9
Nonsensational news coverage	2	6
Ecclesiastical advice	1	3
Normality	1	3
Approbation of neighbors	1	3
Education	1	3
Recognition for law officers	1	3
Love	1	3
Salt Lake Tribune (N = 15; total = 158; % = 9.5)		
Understanding	9	60
Fixing responsibility	8	53
State/outsiders	1	7
Clan	7	47
Law and order	2	13
Justice	2	13
Religious normality	2	13
Traditional marital form	2	13
Positive state image	2	13
Protection of children	1	7

trends and patterns became apparent. Each letter's major theme(s) were identified along with the central value(s) that were either implied or explicitly stated. It became obvious during the immersion that many letters attempted to explain the siege. There was a widespread desire to understand a highly ambiguous and alarming situation that had extensive ramifications for the dominant local culture. For example, one letter writer decried the fact that "this was all so upsetting and senseless to all of the citizens of this state, and what did it accomplish except to make a woman a widow and deny her children a father?" (letter T6; see Appendix A).

It was therefore determined that many of the letters implicitly expressed a value for understanding; the various explanations that were provided indicate that the writers wanted to understand why the siege occurred and to identify its cause-effect sequence. As a corollary to this, almost all the letters that sought to understand the siege through providing an explanation also fixed responsibility or blame for the siege -- typically on the Singer clan but also on others and on the state. It was therefore determined that fixing responsibility was also a value expressed in many of the letters. This value, of course, is difficult or impossible to separate from the understanding value. A cause-effect explanation implies that the causal agent is responsible for the outcome. For analytical purposes, however, it will be advantageous to separate the two.

As Table 1 reveals, a number of different values were expressed in both newspapers. Because the intent here is to ascertain whether letters addressing the siege from the two papers differ, those values with high frequencies deserve special consideration. While the values expressed infrequently are also of interest, they probably will not assist to a significant extent in generating insight into whether or not the two papers differ in important ways.

Four-fifths of the Deseret News letters expressed a value for understanding, and almost three-fourths attempted to fix responsibility for the siege. A perusal of Table 1 confirms the logic of cause-effect, explanation, and blame discussed above. Almost without execption, Deseret News letter writers who provided an explanation for the siege also fixed responsibility for it. The same phenomenon was observed in the letters published in the Salt Lake Tribune. Three-fifths of the Tribune letters offered an explanation (and therefore valued understanding), and more than half attempted to fix responsibility for the tragedy. Therefore, in almost every case in both papers, letters that offered an explanation also fixed responsibility for the siege. The converse is also demonstrated: Letters that did not explain the siege almost never tried to fix responsibility for it.

The most interesting outcome of the analysis involves two of the values: fixing responsibility and freedom from outside interference. In Table 1, "fixing responsibility" is degenerated into two components, "state/outsiders" and "clan." Letter writers who fixed responsibility for the siege blamed either the Singer clan or others. The others who were blamed were typically state authorities, judges, or law enforcement officials. It is highly significant that only one (7 percent) Tribune letter blamed outsiders for the siege, while eight (23 percent) News letters blamed outsiders for the siege. Moreover, the Tribune letter that did not blame the clan fixed responsibility for the siege on the state's religious majority. None of the Deseret News letters blamed the state's religious majority for the siege. Secular authorities were blamed in almost all the News letters that fixed responsibility for the siege on outsiders. When comparing the two papers on this value dimension, it is important to note that responsibility for the siege in News letters was fixed on the state or others by one-third of those who placed blame on either the clan or state/others. For example, those who wrote to the Deseret News blaming outsiders for the siege commented in the following veins:

> I suppose those who started the persecution of the Singer family are now satisfied, whether it was the school board, the water people, the law enforcement [sic] or just a group of meddlesome neighbors. . . . If law enforcement shot every father in this and other states who teach their children at home rather than sent them to school, the mortuaries wouldn't be able to handle the load. (D7)

> Utah should hang her head in shame as well as in sorrow for the Singer tragedy. John Singer, murdered nine years ago, now an officer killed, another man shot and facing imprisonment, families torn up with psychological and emotional damage to children as well as to adults, bombing of a chapel, communities and the entire state and nation distressed -- all because Singers [sic] wanted to school their children at home as many thousands of other families do across our nation. How could this have happened? (D10)

> But as governments get bigger and more powerful they have no regard for human life or cost to taxpayers. The law officers surrounded the Singer home and used terror tactics that were bound to bring on a conflict. They were going to prove they are the law and are going to crush any one [sic] who opposes it, no matter what the cost in lives and money. (D15)

> I wish someone would or could tell me when the public is going to leave the Singer family alone. . . . Let's try to get someone to help the Singer family instead of spending thousands of dollars to torture

them just because John Singer took his kids out of school. (D35)

To reiterate, the demand for freedom from outside influence is a value expressed by almost a fourth of those who wrote the News to express an opinion on the siege. One-third of the letters appearing in the News that fixed responsibility for the siege blamed other individuals or societal institutions and not the clan. This value was entirely absent from the comments of those whose opinions were published in the Tribune. This finding indicates there is at least one major difference between those who write letters for publication to the Salt Lake Tribune and those who write to the Deseret News.

The overlap of values between the two newspapers was not pronounced when theoretically it should have been. It is apparent, then, that two different cultures are delineated in the letters columns of the two newspapers.

Conclusion

It is not unreasonable to deduce that differing letter content indicates differing audiences. It is fairly well established that a writer writes for the audience she or he perceives. Writers have in mind certain characteristics of their audiences and, using those perceptions for a knowledge base, tailor their remarks to achieve rhetorical efficacy. The comparison of letters demonstrated that content differs substantially. If the letters differ, it can be inferred that the audiences differ; if the audiences differ, then they constitute separate interpretive communities or cultures with differing sets of expectations, norms, mores, and values.

The study tends to support both the conflict resolution and catharsis hypotheses. It would appear that the two hypotheses, if not inseparable, are at least very closely related. Tensions build during conflict and must be vented. Psychologists have demonstrated that catharsis is an essential release mechanism for cognitive conflict and stress. It is possible that a larger audience facilitates greater catharsis. If one can gain the empathy or at least the ear of multitudes instead of one or a few, that would seem to assist in ameliorating frustrations. This process appeared to occur in the letters columns of both papers, especially in the Deseret News. The writers were "letting off steam," so to speak. In addition, by providing explanatory scenarios for the siege, they were helping to reduce cultural, social, and intrapersonal conflict for the readers of their missives. Information processing theory indicates that reduction of uncertainty is a key motivator that explains much cognitive and communicative activity. By helping others make sense of a seemingly senseless situation, the letters helped reduce and resolve conflict.

The study tends to support the social integration hypothesis. If it is true that newspapers and their reader actually form discrete interpretive communities, newspapers could serve as a significant factor in integrating individuals into an interpretive community.

The findings tend to disconfirm the newspaper bias hypothesis. The bias hypothesis assumes several things that are invalidated by this study: the "bias" notion assumes that objectivity -- and hence representativeness of public opinion in letters columns -- is possible.

If we accept the existence of separate cultures or interpretive communities of newspaper readers for each publication in a two-newspaper city, that means each community defines "reality" in a way particular to its own predilections. The notion of absolute objectivity, therefore, becomes untenable. Gans' examination of news values buttresses this argument (Gans, 1979). If we accept the notion of discrete readership communities, then it is meaningless to ask whether letters demographically represent a paper's readership. All members of a culture or interpretive community represent its prevailing norms, values, beliefs, etc. The question of whether letters to the editor mirror public opinion becomes meaningless, then, for the same reason. Do papers' letters-to-the-editor policies or editors' and publishers' selection processes introduce a bias that affects the selection of letters that are published? This question also becomes meaningless because letters column policies and those who implement them are part of the process that defines, creates, and maintains the culture.

The study, then, tends to confirm the hypotheses derived from uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974) -- the catharsis, conflict resolution, and social integration hypotheses -- and calls into question the newspaper bias hypothesis. This research also the hypothesis introduced above:

> Letters-to-the-editor columns are a site for the construction and maintenance of reality. The material that appears in them expresses and affirms the values of the readership interpretive community, maintains the community, and serves as a forum for the offering of explanations for ambiguous circumstances in a way that reaffirms the central values of the community.

It appears that this hypothesis and its confirmation form a juncture for several related ideas: the social construction of reality theory, elaborated initially by Berger and Luckman (1967), and the discourse community conceptualization (Rafoth, 1988). Of particular interest in connection with the present study is Rafoth's discussion of discourse community norms. He notes that the expectations and norms of a community "are embodied not only in writers who address and invoke audiences, nor only in the audiences themselves, but in the particular *community* of writers and readers who engage themselves through the medium of text, all together (writers, readers, texts) making up a discourse community" (pp. 140-141, italics in the original). Comparing the concepts "audience" and "discourse community," Rafoth argues that:

> the communities in which writers/speakers and readers/listeners align themselves, together with the discourse norms by which communities have been symbolized, give a theoretically more powerful concept by which we can describe and explain the forces that bind and separate writers, readers, and texts. (1988, p. 143)

Comparing letters to the editor in two newspapers serving the same community provides a fruitful means of testing the notions of discourse community and social construction of reality. Additional research along the lines suggested in this paper would assist in exploring more fully the validity of these explanatory frameworks.

Appendix A

Deseret News

D1 Major theme(s): Leave clan alone.
1/23/88 Value(s): Freedom from outside interference; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: State interfered.
Blames: State.

D2 Major theme(s): State did not provide remedy for Mrs. Singer.
1/27/88 Value(s): Justice; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: People will seek extralegal justice if court fails to.
Blames: State.

D3 Major theme(s): Clan beliefs turned into violent actions.
1/29/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan is dangerous, irrational.
Blames: Clan.

D4 Major theme(s): Police acted correctly.
1/29/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Swapp is a religious zealot.
Blames: Clan.

D5 Major theme(s): Blasts ed. cartoon. Siege is media sideshow.
1/30/88 Value(s): Nonsensational news coverage.

D6 Major theme(s): Law acted properly; Singers created crisis.
2/2/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan created crisis.
Blames: Clan.

D7 Major theme(s): Clan broke laws but so did others.
2/6/88 Value(s): Justice; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Others persecuted Singer family first.
Blames: School board, "water people," law, or neighbors.

D8 Major theme(s): All parties ignored advice of LDS church.
2/6/88 Value(s): Ecclesiastical advice; Understanding.
Explains: Failure to heed church advice led to seige.

D9 Major theme(s): Police acted properly.
2/7/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Swapp wanted confrontation.
Blames: Clan.

D10 Major theme(s): Utah guilty -- did not allow home schooling.
2/10/88 Value(s): Freedom from outside interference; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: State caused siege by not allowing home schooling.
Blames: State.

D11 Major theme(s): Siege issues don't involve religion or polygamy.
2/8/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Murder and treason are the issues.
Blames: Clan.

D12 Major theme(s): Home schooling and love for family were issues.
2/9/88 Value(s): Freedom from outside interference; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Crisis caused by John Singer's dealings with Utah. He loved family and wanted children properly educated.
Blames: State and corrupt public schools.

D13 Major theme(s): Commends professionalism of law officers.
2/9/88 Value(s): Law and order.

D14 Major theme(s): Blames clan and blasts media coverage.
2/10/88 Value(s): Law and order; Nonsensational news coverage; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan broke the law.
Blames: Clan.

D15 Major theme(s): Criticizes law officers.
2/10/88 Value(s): Freedom from outside interference; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: State caused an unnecessary confrontation.
Blames: State.

D16 Major theme(s): Singer women should not be in chains.
2/10/88 Value(s): Fairness (lawmen should have handcuffed them and Deseret News should have not run photo); Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan disregarded law and is religiously fanatic.
Blames: Clan.

D17 Major theme(s): Society not to blame in siege.
2/11/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan is terroristic and anarchical.
Blames: Clan.

D18 Major theme(s): Singer women should not be in chains.
2/11/88 Value(s): Fairness (paper should not have run photo).

D19 Major theme(s): Recurrence possible, turn property into park.
2/11/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan may come back to terrorize again.
Blames: Clan.

D20 Major theme(s): Was it worth the cost?
2/12/88 Value(s): Fairness (cost to taxpayers unfair).

D21 Major theme(s): Singers sought remedy, it was not forthcoming.
2/12/88 Value(s): Freedom from outside interference; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: State forced beliefs about schooling on Singers.
Blames: State.

D22 Major theme(s): Police wanted House to became martyr.
2/15/88 Value(s): Understanding (wants explanation, does not provide it).

D23 Major theme(s): Many people home school children.
2/15/88 Value(s): Normality; Approbation of neighbors.

D24 Major theme(s): Police acted properly.
2/15/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan's beliefs caused bombing and siege.
Blames: Clan.

D25 Major theme(s): Set up scholarship in Lieut. House's name.
2/16/88 Value(s): Education; recognition for law officers.

D26 Major theme(s): Clan to blame, not state.
2/16/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan broke law and threatened community.
Blames: Clan.

D27 Major theme(s): Fair trial not possible.
2/17/88 Value(s): Justice.

D28 Major theme(s): John Singer's demise wasn't due to school issue.
2/23/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Personal grievances should be resolved legally.
Blames: Clan.

D29 Major theme(s): The clan was responsible for siege.
2/24/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan chose not to live peacefully.
Blames: Clan.

D30 Major theme(s): Singer's refusal to give up kids started it.
2/25/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.

Explains: Clan openly defied law.
Blames: Clan.

D31 Major theme(s): Other states also have crazies.
2/26/88 Value(s): Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Siege can be attributed to bizarre human behavior.
Blames: Clan (implicitly, not a central theme of letter).

D32 Major theme(s): John Singer started problem.
2/26/88 Value(s): Justice; Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Singer started fight with state over refusal to demonstrate that children were being educated properly.
Blames: Clan.

D33 Major theme(s): Clan's hatred caused siege.
2/28/88 Value(s): Love; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Their hatred brought about their destruction.
Blames: Failure to replace hate with love.

D34 Major theme(s): Struggle over water to blame for siege.
2/29/88 Value(s): Understanding; Fixing responsibility
Explains: Neighbors can withhold water from neighbors they don't "cotton" to.
Blames: Water power.

D35 Major theme(s): Public is to blame for siege.
2/29/88 Value(s): Freedom from outside interference; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Family was tortured for taking kids out of school.
Blames: Public/state.

Salt Lake Tribune

T1 Major theme(s): Clan children are suffering; Save them.
1/24/88 Value(s): Protection of children; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Swapp is demented.
Blames: Clan.

T2 Major theme(s): Clarification needed on many aspects.
1/29/88 Value(s): Understanding (wants explanation, does not provide it).

T3 Major theme(s): Image of state and LDS church.
2/1/88 Value(s): Positive image; Fixing responsibility.
Blames: Clan (but is not part of central message).

T4 Major theme(s): Why is polygamy allowed in Utah?
2/6/88 Value(s): Traditional marital form.

T5 Major theme(s): Commends police and blames clan.
2/7/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan is violent.
Blames: Clan.

T6 Major theme(s): Clan terrorized town; End the violence.
2/7/88 Value(s): Law and order; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan disrespected life and property.
Blames: Clan.

T7 Major theme(s): Patsyism and publicity encouraged clan.
2/7/88 Value(s): Justice; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Swapp caused it all.
Blames: Clan.

T8 Major theme(s): Theological dispute with another letter writer.
2/8/88 Value(s): Not applicable.

T9 Major theme(s): Theological dispute with another letter writer.
2/8/88 Value(s): Not applicable.

T10 Major theme(s): Polygamy laws should be enforced.
2/8/88 Value(s): Traditional marital forms; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Clan is violent.
Blames: Clan.

T11 Major theme(s): State is full of religious fanatics.
2/12/88 Value(s): Religious normality; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Religious fanaticism is at root of difficulty.
Blames: Clan (by implication).

T12 Major theme(s): State has a negative image.
2/14/88 Value(s): Positive image.

T13 Major theme(s): Thank you note from Lieut. House's mother.
2/16/88 Value(s): Not applicable.

T14 Major theme(s): Majority in Utah is religiously fanatical.
2/21/88 Value(s): Normality; Understanding; Fixing responsibility.
Explains: Religious fanatics abound.
Blames: Religious majority.

T15 Major theme(s): Call for a fair, impartial investigation.
1/24/88 Value(s): Understanding (wants explanation, does not provide it); Justice.

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SOME DETERMINANTS OF ACCURATE PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC OPINION

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Support for this research was provided by The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis, MN, August 9-12, 1990.

Abstract

Perception of public opinion requires, at a minimum, two cognitions. First, the individual must "know" his/her own opinion on an issue. Second, the individual must have an estimate of what "most others" or some other appropriate collectivity believes. The combination of these two perceptions for an issue produces a four-fold matrix specifying the accuracy of those perceptions of others. This study identified the four types as 1) false consensus, 2) liberal bias, 3) conservative bias, and 4) majority consensus. Discriminant analysis found two functions differentiating between groups. False consensus and majority consensus respondents were discriminated by images of the future, while liberal and conservative bias groups were differentiated in terms of interest in surveillance-type information.

Introduction

Public opinion boasts an inveterate history of critical inquiry as to its formation and function within the sociopolitical environment. More than 50 years ago, Allport (1937) asserted that public opinion becomes manifest through the communication behavior among individuals within a society. Although the relationship between public opinion and communication is perspicuous, a myriad of public opinion studies conducted since Allport's early interpretation have overlooked communication in examining the public opinion process.

Noelle-Neumann's (1974) spiral of silence theory redirected scholarly attention to the importance of communication in the formation of public opinion, in particular the influences of the availability of information, the constraints imposed on receiving information, assessments of the majority public opinion, and beliefs about future opinion trends. The spiral of silence has persevered despite criticism (Glynn & McLeod, 1984; Merten, 1984; Salmon & Kline, 1984), and when coupled with more recent work examining pluralistic ignorance (Glynn, 1987; Glynn & Ostman, 1988) there has been a refocusing in research on the importance of perception, cognition, and communication in the public opinion process (Glynn, 1987; Edelstein, 1988; Edelstein, Ito & Kepplinger, 1989).

In linking Allport's concept of public opinion with more recent research, public opinion does not emerge on the sociopolitical horizon until the public recognizes that other members of the public hold opinions about issues. In other words, the power of public opinion in the public mind is largely a function of the perception of the "imagined crowd" rather than the tabulation of the aggregate of individual opinions about an issue in question. Mass media (i.e., published opinion), interpersonal discussion, and observation of the social environment (i.e., what Noelle-Neumann (1974) articulated as the "quasi-statistical organ") influence the public's conceptualization of public opinion. A better understanding of the factors influencing public opinion about issues and policies is requisite for the development of a communication theory of public opinion.

In an attempt to gain a clearer understanding of the perceptual and communicatory influences on the public opinion process, this study examined the "actual" and "perceived" public approval of the Draft Agreement between Great Britain and the People's Republic of China finalizing the return of the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong to mainland China on 1 July 1997. According to MacKinnon (1988), "Hong Kong's 5.6 million inhabitants will participate in an experiment never before attempted--the welding of a communist and capitalist framework into one country" (p. 17). A multiple discriminant model was employed to ascertain differences among opinion publics based on "actual" and "perceived" approval of the Draft Agreement in relation to mass media use, interpersonal discussion, and images of the future.

Literature Review

While a plethora of studies examining public opinion have focused, for the most part, on what members of society think about a particular issue, fewer studies have examined the public's perceptions of the majority opinion, and whether or not these perceptions are related to each other and to communication behavior. Sociological theory postulates that individuals perceive and interpret their environment through social interaction (Merton, 1968). While the phenomenon of the perception of another's opinions has received limited attention in public opinion research, the substantial literature on person perception in social psychology addresses this issue at the small group level (Tagiuri, 1968; Schneider, Hastorf, & Ellsworth, 1979, Wyer & Srull, 1980; 1981). Research in social cognition has focused on a composite of theories to better understand human perception and judgment, in particular how people think about other people or objects, how people think they think about other people or objects, and how people think other people think about people or objects (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Wyer & Srull, 1984). However, for the most part, research in social cognition has been limited to small group behavior.

Past public opinion studies examining pluralistic ignorance, the phenomenon of individuals' misperceptions of the opinions held by others, have failed to probe the underlying factors contributing to pluralistic ignorance (Breed & Ktsanes, 1961; Fields & Schuman, 1976-77; Katz & Allport, 1931; O'Gorman, 1975; Taylor, 1982), even though Breeds and Ktsanes and Fields and Schuman, in their conclusions, suggested that communication may have been related to variations in perceptual accuracy. Despite implications as to the importance of communication, interpersonal discussion and mass media use "rarely gets identified as an important causal mechanism in the analysis of major systematic shifts" (Chaffee, 1975, p. 86). Individuals, as a result of past experiences, are assumed to have developed a set of intuitive heuristics to guide their perception and behavior (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Without adequate information upon which to base decisions in a situation, the individual is left to draw on past experiences and employ intuitive heuristics to make decisions. An informational deficit resulting from insufficient past experience or mass media use, or a lack of social interaction, characterized by inadequate interpersonal discussion may contribute to the individual's inaccurate estimate of majority opinion.

Generally, in the public opinion literature, inaccurate beliefs about the distribution of public opinion have been referred to as pluralistic ignorance. However, it is important to note that Scheff (1967), in an attempt to develop a sociological framework of consensus, employed the term false consensus when referring to what is more commonly termed pluralistic ignorance. Similarly, in the social cognition literature, perceptual inaccuracies at the small group level have been referred to as judgmental bias or error (Kruglanski & Ajzen, 1983). Merton (1968) distinguished between two forms of pluralistic ignorance. In the first pattern, individuals presume that their opinions are held in isolation. In the second pattern, termed "looking-glass perception," individuals presume that their opinions are shared in common with others. Merton (1968) suggested that individuals utilize a "mechanism of observability" to assess the distribution of opinions among others particularly those within a reference group. Merton's "mechanism of observability" appears to be the equivalent of Noelle-Neumann's (1974) "quasi-statistical organ." Both terms refer to the individual's ability to estimate the distribution of opinion within a reference group or a more general public.

In many of the early studies of pluralistic ignorance, attitudes toward racial issues, in particular desegregation, were examined. Breed and Ktsanes (1961), in an analysis of attitudes toward desegregation in a two-sample survey in New Orleans, found two patterns of pluralistic ignorance. One pattern of pluralistic ignorance was described as "conservative bias," wherein respondents, who identified themselves as tolerant of desegregation, were more likely to perceive most others as intolerant of desegregation. The second pattern of pluralistic ignorance, "looking-glass perception," was more likely to occur for individuals who were less tolerant of desegregation and who perceived that most others believed as they did.

Although Breed and Ktsanes (1961) did not include communication variables in their analysis, they did speculate that proportionally more respondents in the city-wide probability sample would exhibit pluralistic ignorance than would respondents in the more homogeneous church sample because interpersonal communication should have been greater among the smaller sample. Contrary to their expectations, there were proportionally more pluralistically ignorant respondents in the church sample. Breed and Ktsanes argued that the "level of crystallization" of the issue may have contributed to the discrepancy in their findings. They argued that the desegregation issue was probably more salient for the city-wide respondents because they lived within the area where desegregation would have had the greatest impact. When an issue is crystallized through heavy mass media coverage and/or interpersonal discussion, the role of pluralistic ignorance in reinforcing and maintaining the status quo decreases because once an opinion change has crystallized, publicity acts as a means to transform what was once thought to be a liberal minority opinion into the normative opinion (Katz, 1981). In addition, Breed and Ktsanes (1961) found that individuals whose attitudes were in the direction of change were more likely to be more accurate assessors of the actual distribution of opinion than were those holding less liberal views.

Later studies of racial issues found similar patterns of pluralistic ignorance. Fields and Schuman (1976-77) found evidence of "looking-glass perceptions," and argued that they were more likely to occur when individuals had limited information about an issue. O'Gorman (1975; 1979) and O'Gorman and Garry (1976-77), in analyses of attitudes toward desegregation, uncovered a tendency toward "conservative bias" among whites favoring desegregation, and a tendency toward "looking-glass perceptions" among whites favoring segregation. In other words, individuals holding traditional beliefs tended to perceive most others as holding similar attitudes (i.e., looking-glass perceptions), whereas individuals who favored a more liberal viewpoint, one of social change, tended to view others as holding a more conservative viewpoint (i.e., conservative bias).

Although common patterns of perceptual inaccuracies were found in the early studies of pluralistic ignorance, no serious attempt was made to identify factors that were influencing perceptual patterns in opinion formation until Noelle-Neumann (1974; 1977; 1979; 1980) proposed her theory of the spiral of silence. Noelle-Neumann's theory places explanations of public opinion formation within a social-psychological framework. She argued that opinion formation is related to the individual's own opinion and his or her assessment of the majority opinion. Both measures, in turn, are hypothesized to influence the individual's estimate of the future direction of opinion.[1] In the spiral of silence theory, perceived majority opinion is the presumed antecedent of opinion formation and expression. When patterns of pluralistic ignorance occur, perceptual processes are operative despite the fact that the perceptions are inaccurate. The emphasis on perception and communication makes manifest the parallel between the spiral of silence and pluralistic ignorance.

To determine the conditions under which both phenomena (i.e., the spiral of silence and pluralistic ignorance) occurred, Taylor (1982) tested public opinion about environmental issues. He found that both advocates and opponents of stronger environmental regulation perceived themselves to be in the majority, and proposed that "looking-glass perception" accounted for the findings of pluralistic ignorance. Furthermore, he found that the "expected benefit"[2] was the motivating variable in opinion expression, not "fear of isolation" as had been presumed in the spiral of silence. However, Taylor did not include communication variables in the study.

To date, Glynn and her colleagues (Glynn & McLeod, 1984, 1985; Glynn, 1987; Glynn & Ostman, 1988) have implemented the most consistent program of research examining perceptual influences on the opinion process while taking communication variables into account. In her research, Glynn uncovered patterns of pluralistic ignorance, and was able to link mass media and interpersonal communication to those perceptual inaccuracies. In general, she found that respondents who relied on mass media and interpersonal discussion were more likely to perceive the majority opinion as similar to their own ("looking-glass perception"), whereas respondents who did not rely on mass media or interpersonal discussion were more likely to perceive the majority opinion as different from their own (conservative bias). Respondents using mass media, but not interpersonal discussion, tended to see the majority as holding different opinions from their own (liberal bias). In contrast, those respondents who engaged in interpersonal discussion but did not use mass media, perceived that the majority held similar opinions to their own ("looking-glass perception"). However, Glynn did not differentiate between consensus and false consensus; therefore, the distinction as to whether or not those respondents characterized by "looking-glass perception" also were characterized by consensus or false consensus is not evident.

Patterns of Pluralistic Ignorance

In past public opinion research, when individuals have been asked to estimate the distribution of opinion on public issues, several patterns have appeared consistently in the empirical findings. First, most individuals are able to provide an estimate of an issue's opinion distribution and the direction of that distribution. Second, some individuals are not able to accurately estimate the distribution of opinion. Generally, this inaccuracy has been referred to as pluralistic ignorance although Scheff (1967) applied the term false consensus to the phenomenon. Third, several patterns of pluralistic ignorance have been found in the data. "Looking-glass perception" generally appears to characterize individuals who favor the conservative viewpoint, and estimate that others share that same opinion. "Conservative bias" typically is associated with individuals who favor the liberal viewpoint, but perceive that the majority favors the opposite viewpoint. A third pattern of pluralistic ignorance, suggested in Glynn's (1987) research, "liberal bias," logically characterizes individuals who favor the conservative view, yet believe that the majority favors the liberal viewpoint. Fourth, some individuals should be able to accurately estimate the distribution of opinion. Fifth, when individuals agree, and perceive that the majority agrees, and in fact, the majority does agree, consensus is said to exist.

Sixth, in Glynn's (1987) study, communication variables were found to be associated with respondents' estimates of the distribution of opinion. Respondents who used both mass media and interpersonal discussion about an issue were more likely to see the majority opinion as similar to their own ("looking-glass perception"). Respondents who used neither mass media nor engaged in discussion were more likely to perceive majority opinion as different from their own (conservative bias). Similarly, respondents who used only mass media perceived differences between their opinions and the majority opinion (liberal bias), whereas respondents who only engaged in interpersonal discussion perceived similarities between their own opinions and the majority opinion. Finally, from Breed and Ktsanes' (1961) crystallization hypothesis, there should be less pluralistic ignorance when an issue has been well-crystallized in the media, and has been on the public agenda for some time.

From the above review of the literature, a schematic of possible perceptual patterns for the distribution of opinion for any issue was developed and is presented in Figure 1. What differentiates this model from Glynn's (1987) work is that she examined three potential outcomes: 1) "looking-glass perception," 2) conservative bias, and 3) liberal bias. The proposed model specifies eight possible outcomes for the distribution of opinion when perceptual accuracy is included in the model: 1) If the respondents hold a negative opinion toward the issue, and estimate that the majority also holds a negative opinion toward the issue, and the majority, in fact, does hold a negative opinion, there is consensus; 2) If respondents hold a negative opinion, and estimate that the majority holds a negative opinion, when in fact the majority holds a positive opinion toward the issue, there is false consensus (i.e., pluralistic ignorance); 3) If respondents view the issue negatively, but estimate that the majority views the issue positively, and the majority, in fact, does view the issue positively, then there is accurate liberal bias; 4) If the respondents view the issue negatively, and estimate that the majority views the issue positively, but the majority actually views the issue negatively, then there is inaccurate liberal bias (i.e., pluralistic ignorance); 5) If the respondents hold a positive opinion toward the issue, but estimate that the majority holds a negative opinion, and the majority does hold a negative opinion, then there is accurate conservative bias; 6) If the respondents hold a positive opinion toward the issue, but estimate that the majority holds a negative opinion toward the issue, when, in fact, the majority actually holds a positive opinion, then there is inaccurate conservative bias (i.e., pluralistic ignorance); 7) If the respondents view the issue positively, and estimate that the majority also views the issue positively, and in fact, the majority does view the issue positively, then there is consensus; and 8) If the respondents view the issue positively, and estimate that the majority views the issue positively, when the majority actually views the issue negatively, then there is false consensus (i.e., pluralistic ignorance).

Public Opinion About the Draft Agreement

This study examines patterns of pluralistic ignorance within the context of a politically charged issue, the return of the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong to the governing power of the People's Republic of China. Before enumerating the hypotheses, a brief description of the setting of the survey will provide the reader with a context for the '1997' issue. The backdrop of this study focuses on a series of events which led to the initialling of an agreement between the governments of Great Britain and the People's Republic of China that details the return of the British Crown Colony to China's control effective 1 July 1997. The Draft Agreement between the two countries was initialed on 26 September 1984.

In the fall of 1982, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's visit to Beijing made manifest the reality of the Crown Colony's return to China's control in 1997. While the '1997' issue was publicized widely in the Hong Kong media during the two years following Thatcher's visit, the indeterminacy was settled by the signing of the agreement in December 1984 that granted Hong Kong another 50 years of capitalist life after 1997 as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.[3] The data analyzed in this study were collected in January 1985, less than one month following the signing of the agreement. Following the initialling of the agreement in September 1984, copies of the *Draft Agreement* appeared in Hong Kong newspapers, and the Government Information Office distributed copies throughout the colony. Furthermore, 23 opinion polls were conducted between late September and mid-November 1984 (White Paper, 29 November 1984) to assess the acceptability of the agreement among Hong Kong residents. In view of the heavy publicity during the two years of negotiation and the campaign to win public approval for the agreement, the issue should have been crystallized, thus reducing the likelihood of substantial patterns of pluralistic ignorance.

Expectations

In the context of the pluralistic ignorance literature, a distribution of opinion will exist regarding the approval of the *Draft Agreement* among the Hong Kong population, and members of the public will be able to estimate the direction of that distribution. First, given the extensive publicity about the agreement's guarantee of 50 years of capitalist life after '1997' under China's "one country, two systems" policy, it is expected that the majority of respondents will express approval of the *Draft Agreement*.

Second, two sets of communication variables were examined in this study. In the first set of variables, respondents were asked about their media use and interpersonal discussion. The second set of information utility variables included extrinsic utility, intrinsic utility, and information relevance. If communication is critical to perceptions of public opinion, one of these two sets of variables will be expected to differentiate between the two looking-glass groups, the consensus majority and the false consensus minority; the other should differentiate between the two pluralistic ignorance groups. There appears to be no definitive set of theoretical constructs or empirical findings upon which to base predictions as to which set of communication variables should be related to the consensus majority. However, Breed and Ktsanes (1961) did suggest that issue salience and level of issue crystallization may have been contributing factors to the accuracy of opinion estimates. Thus, it may be expected that information utility will be more likely to discriminate between groups than would simple media use.

The third set of variables, the images of the future, are expected to differentiate between the consensus majority and one of the two groups that disapprove of the agreement -- the false consensus group or the liberal bias group based on Noelle-Neumann's (1974) assumption that individuals who hold opinions in the direction of change will be more accurate assessors of public opinion.

Method

The data were collected via telephone interviews from 624 Hong Kong residents during January 1985. The telephone numbers were selected using interval techniques from the approximately 1.3 million listings in the three Hong Kong residential telephone directories. Replacement numbers were also drawn proportionally by interval procedures from the three directories. Replacement numbers were assigned randomly in instances of refusals and where there was no answer at the original number.[4] Interviewers were students in the Department of Journalism and Communication at The Chinese University of Hong Kong who received training in interviewing techniques prior to data collection. All interviewers were native Cantonese speakers who were also fluent in English. The questionnaire first was written in English, was translated into Chinese, was translated back into English, and then was translated again into Chinese. Only when all four versions were considered equivalent was the questionnaire considered appropriate for the survey. Analysis of respondent demographics suggests that while the data were collected from a broad cross section, respondents tended to be younger and better educated than would have been expected from Hong Kong census data.

Group Definition

From the data, four opinion groups were created by cross-tabulating questions asking the respondent's opinion of the '1997' agreement and the respondent's estimate of the majority of Hong Kong residents' opinions of the agreement. In order to create the four opinion groups specified in Figure 2 for the discriminant procedure, the original four-point response scale from "very good" to "very bad" assessing the respondent's opinion of the agreement was collapsed into two response alternatives: 1) good, and 2) not good. The resulting four groups presented in Figure 2 are defined as follows:

Group 1. False consensus: This group is comprised of respondents who held negative opinions about the '1997' agreement, and who estimated that the majority of people in Hong Kong also held negative opinions about the agreement, when the majority actually held positive opinions about the agreement. This group incorrectly estimated that "most people" believed as they did.

Group 2. Liberal bias: These respondents viewed the '1997' agreement negatively, but correctly estimated that the majority viewed the agreement positively. Therefore, they held a conservative position but correctly estimated that "most people" held a more liberal opinion.

Group 3. Conservative bias: Respondents in Group 3 believed that the '1997' agreement was good, but incorrectly estimated that the majority of people in Hong Kong believed that the agreement was not good. These respondents held a liberal, change-oriented position, and incorrectly estimated that "most people" held a conservative, no-change, position.

Group 4. Consensus: These respondents believed that the '1997' agreement was good, and correctly estimated that the majority of people in Hong Kong shared that same opinion. These respondents believed that "most people" believed as they did and were correct in that estimate.

Hence, there are two conditions in which the respondents were correct in estimating the opinion of others and two in which the respondents were incorrect. In terms of traditional description, the two consensus groups hold a "looking-glass" perception of most people. That is, "most other people hold the same opinion

I do." It is not clear whether, in this case, the accurate estimate is a function of accurate perceptions of other people's opinions based on knowledge, the adoption of published opinions as one's own opinions, projection of one's own opinion to others, or a lucky guess by a disinterested respondent.

Discriminating Variables

In assessing the relationships between opinion groups regarding the '1997' agreement, it seems likely that more than communication of the terms of the agreement would be involved. First, the change in governments from capitalist to socialist (communist) should lead most people to assess the likelihood of a variety of future conditions. These assessments, or images of the future, probably are more powerful for some people than for others. This is likely to be the case for those who feel they have the most to lose from political change. Variables were included in the analysis to assess respondent beliefs about the extent to which the agreement would impact Hong Kong's future through the maintenance of 1) political stability, 2) economic strength, 3) lifestyle stability, 4) crime control, 5) freedom of travel, 6) free newspapers and television and 7) adequate public transportation and 8) medical services after 1997.

Second, the relative importance of information and the respondents' general orientation toward "hard news" might differentiate among opinion groups. Those with a stronger "news interest" and especially an interest in news about the '1997' problem are assumed to be more accurate than those without an interest in news of '1997' in assessing the state of public opinion. Individuals not concerned with '1997' and with a greater interest in the lighter side of media content are assumed to be less accurate in their predictions of public opinion. These variables, extrinsic and intrinsic utility, relevance of government activity to the individual, and attention to news about issues have been examined in previous research (Atkin, 1973; Wang, 1977).

Extrinsic utility is characteristic of media content that is useful in making decisions. Extrinisic utility represents a surveillance function and was measured by the following questions: "I read newspapers and watch TV news to keep up with the main issues of the day," and "I read newspapers and watch TV news to keep informed of the Hong Kong government's plans and decisions." A related surveillance variable, information relevance, focuses directly on the need for citizens to know what government plans. Relevance was measured by two items: "It is important for me to keep informed about what the government plans to do," and "It is important for the ordinary people of Hong Kong to keep themselves informed about government plans and actions." Intrinsic utility represents a pleasure function, and was measured by two items: "I listen to TV news and read newspapers to enjoy the excitement of what is going on in Hong Kong," and "I listen to TV news and read newspapers to enjoy the excitement of what is going on in the rest of the world."

A third set of variables that may discriminate among opinion groups includes general media use and interpersonal discussion. Media use variables measured reported use of newspapers, magazines, television and radio news "today." Interpersonal discussion variables included talking with someone about '1997' at home, at work, on the telephone, and while shopping. The statistical procedure employed multiple discriminant analysis to explore differences among the opinion groups based on the three sets of discriminating variables. The analysis included a stepwise procedure in which the variables selected maximized the distance between the two closest groups.[5] Only variable associations of .30 or greater with a discriminant function will be considered in the interpretation of the analysis.

Findings

Estimates of Majority Opinion

Overall, 85.9% of the respondents (n= 394) said they thought the agreement was "generally good" or "very good" (Table 1). Further, 83.0% of the respondents (n=385) said they thought "most other" people believed the agreement was "generally good" or "very good." Nearly 8 in 10 of the respondents (78.2%; n=363) reported that they personally thought the agreement was good and that they thought "most other" people also believed the agreement was good. Thus, the vast majority of respondents comprise Group 4, and can be characterized as exhibiting "looking-glass consensus." Thus, the first expectation, specifying that the majority of respondents would express approval of the Draft Agreement, was supported.

The remaining 31 respondents who personally felt the agreement was good reported that "most other" people believed the agreement was not good. These respondents were classified into Group 3, and can be described as a minority exhibiting conservative bias. Of the 70 respondents who reported believing the agreement was not good, 48 incorrectly estimated "most other" people also believed the agreement was not good. These respondents made up Group 1, a minority exhibiting "looking-glass false consensus." The remaining 22 respondents, who personally believed the agreement was not good, correctly estimated that the majority held favorable opinions of the agreement. This minority of respondents characterized by liberal bias were categorized into Group 2.

Discriminant Functions

The analysis isolated two significant ($p < .01$) discriminant functions accounting for 90.3% of total variance that differentiated between opinion groups. Function 1 separated Group 1, the "looking-glass false consensus" minority, from Group 4, the "looking-glass consensus" majority. Function 2 separated Group 2, the "liberal bias" minority that correctly assessed the majority opinion, from Group 3, the "conservative bias" minority that incorrectly assessed the majority opinion. The structure matrix is presented in Table 2. It was expected that at least one of the two sets of communication variables would separate at least two of the opinion groups. Function 2 was associated with variables representing extrinsic utility, attention to news about '1997,' and, to a lesser extent, attention to television news "today." Function 2 separated Group 2 from Group 3, that is, respondents who exhibited liberal bias (i.e., they disapproved of the agreement but predicted that most people approved) and those who exhibited conservative bias (i.e., those who approved of the agreement but predicted that most people did not). Group 2 was positively associated with Function 2, whereas Group 3 was negatively associated with the function. The group centroids and centroid plot are presented in Table 3 and Figure 3 respectively.

As expected, one set of communication variables differentiated between a group exhibiting pluralistic ignorance (i.e., Group 3) and a group holding accurate perceptions of the majority (i.e., Group 2). The extrinsic utility of mass media content and attention to news about the specific '1997' issue are the communication variables that differentiated between the two groups. Although respondents in Group 2 held negative opinions of the Draft Agreement, their interest in the extrinsic utility of media content (i.e., using media to "keep up with the main issues of the day" and to "keep informed of the government's plans and decisions") and attention to news about '1997' appears to have provided them with the necessary information to accurately estimate majority opinion. To a lesser extent, "watching television news today" was associated with Function 2 (.28) although not at the level specified for interpretative purposes (.30). That respondents' accuracy in assessing the distribution of opinion regarding the '1997' issue was associated with attention to news of '1997' and media use for surveillance of government activities provides some support for Breed and Ktsanes' (1961) argument that issue salience and level of crystallization, in fact, may be contributing factors to the accuracy of opinion estimates.

It was expected that the respondents' images of the future would differentiate the "looking-glass consensus" majority from one of the groups that disapproved of the agreement. Function 1 separated Group 4, the "looking-glass" consensus majority, from Group 1, the "looking-glass" false consensus minority. Group 4 was positively associated with Function 1, whereas Group 1 was negatively associated with the function. The consensus majority was associated with positive evaluations of the '1997' agreement which was expected to maintain 1) political stability, 2) economic strength, 3) control of crime, 4) adequate public transportation and 5) medical services, and 6) free newspapers and television. As expected, images of the future differentiated between the consensus majority and the false consensus minority, and appear to support Noelle-Neumann's (1980) assumption that individuals holding opinions in the direction of change are likely to be more accurate assessors of public opinion. General communication variables, mass media use and/or interpersonal discussion, were expected to differentiate between at least two groups. However, the third discriminant function was not statistically significant. As is shown in Table 2, reported "reading a newsmagazine today" was weakly related to the second function (.17) while the other communication variables had correlations of .13 or less with the two significant functions.

Discussion

The findings affirm the influence of the social-psychological factors of perception and communication on the public opinion process. The importance of the individual's estimates of future outcomes and interest in specific kinds of information were found to be determinants of the estimates of the distribution of public opinion. Although the variables tapping images of Hong Kong's future influenced the vast majority of respondents, this analysis provided no substantive information about where the respondents obtained those images because none of the communication variables was strongly associated with either significant function. This outcome contrasts Glynn's (1987) findings of associations among mass media use and interpersonal communication and perceptions of the distribution of majority opinion. In the present study, information variables (i.e., extrinsic utility and attention to news about '1997') rather than communication variables (i.e., general media use and interpersonal discussion) were the significant predictors of accuracy of the majority opinion.

The discriminant model employed in the present analysis isolated two patterns of pluralistic ignorance. The "looking-glass false consensus" minority was negatively associated with images of the future, whereas the "conservative bias" minority was negatively associated with extrinsic utility and attention to news about '1997.' Those respondents whose perceptions were characterized by false consensus exhibit the pattern previously defined in the literature wherein they hold the traditional or "no change" position and perceive that "most others" also share this perception. The lack of environmental surveillance appears to be the factor contributing to the inaccurate perceptions of the those respondents characterized by "conservative bias" because they hold opinions in the direction of change but estimate that the "most others" do not. The discriminant model employed in this analysis provides an explanation for the differing patterns of pluralistic ignorance, an explanation that has not been substantiated in past research.

The key variable in the second function, the extrinsic utility of mass media, indicated a generalized interest in the surveillance of the environment among respondents. However, extrinsic utility does not provide a measure of the information sources that respondents use in the scanning of their environment, and those general media use variables in the model did not account for a significant amount of the variance in the third function. The other variable that had a substantial association with the second function, attention to news about '1997' indicates that interest in a problem or issue and attention to media content about that issue is associated with the accurate assessment of what most members of the public believe.

It is interesting to note that the reported reading of the agreement was not related to any of the three functions. Perhaps, the meaning of the agreement needed to be clarified through discussion or by scanning published opinion about the agreement before deciding whether or not the Draft Agreement's provisions were favorable to the future of Hong Kong. Whatever that process, it appears not to have been captured in this analysis. This is not to say that the opinion process occurred quickly during the three weeks between the signing of the agreement and the survey interviewing. The Draft Agreement had been initialed by the British and Chinese governments three months before the formal signing, and the government had made strong efforts to convince the public that the agreement's terms were favorable to Hong Kong's future.

The weak correlations of the media variables suggests that newspapers and magazines presented an ambiguous view of what the agreement meant for the future of Hong Kong. Indeed, the 37 daily newspapers then published in the Crown Colony represented the political spectrum from extreme right to extreme left. To the extent that the print media did not present a coherent view of the agreement, readers were left to form their own views. And, as is the case in all situations where political action is remote and conducted by government officials, any interpersonal discussion of the event would have had to have been based on media content.

These findings about the relationship of media to opinions raises a question as to the relative contributions of each medium to the formation and stability of public opinion. These data suggest that a coherent view of the issue was provided by government sources, and that presentation helped establish a substantial majority opinion in support of the government position. This position, including the unlikely probability that Beijing would not abide by part or all of the agreement, did not contribute to a general acceptance of the agreement. On the other hand, the lack of association between print media and the opinion groups does suggest that there was a substantial diversity among the printed opinions. To the extent that a multiplicity of media outlets providing a wide diversity of views is likely to retard development of a coherent public view of "public" opinion, it is also likely, it seems, to retard development of a spiral of silence in that many groups with a wide variety of opinions would regularly see their views in print. On the other hand, where there are only one or two outlets and the content of those outlets is similar, it may be relatively easy for the public to estimate what "most other" people think. If this process, based on limited media sources, leads to the public adopting what the media report as public opinion, a spiral of silence with an increasing impact over time would most likely develop, and the effect of the media would be not just to tell the public what to think about, but what to think.

Notes

1. An additional component of the "spiral of silence" theory, the willingness to express one's opinion publicly without fear of isolation, has found limited support in the literature. What appears to be most important about the theory is its focus on the importance of communication and perception in the public opinion process.

2. If the individual perceives that his or her "side" of the issue has a chance of winning, then greater value is attached to speaking out. Expressing an opinion on the losing side of an issue may not be worth the effort involved in expressing the opinion. This is not the same as Noelle-Neumann's (1974) fear of isolation where the individual is afraid to speak out.

3. China technically was to regain administrative control only over the New Territories which London had leased in 1898 for 99 years. However, much of the argument has been about the question of sovereignty over the entire colony including Hong Kong Island and the tip of the Kowloon Peninsula. Wesley-Smith (1980) suggested that China always had retained residual sovereignty over the New Territories because the land was leased rather than ceded to Britain. China also demanded the return of Hong Kong Island and the 3.5 square miles of the Kowloon Peninsula both of which China ceded to Britain in perpetuity as a consequence of losing the Opium Wars of 1842 and 1860. China argued that land was ceded at the point of a gun; hence, the treaties were invalid. Britain, of course, argued the contrary.

4. The completion rate of the original 625 numbers was 61.1% (382). Replacement numbers were assigned to bring the total number of responses to the originally specified sample size.

5. Demographic variables were included in the initial analysis; however, there were not correlated with any of the opinion groups. Therefore, they were dropped from the analysis.

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TABLE 1

Number and Proportion of Respondents in the Four Opinion Groups

		Estimate of "Most People's" Opinion About the Draft Agreement		
Own Opinion		Negative	Positive	Total
		Group 1	Group 2	
Negative	n	48	22	70
	r%	68.6	31.4	15.1
	c%	60.8	5.7	
		Group 3	Group 4	
Positive	n	31	363	394
	r%	7.9	91.1	85.9
	c%	39.8	94.3	
Total	n	79	385	464
	%	17.0	83.0	100.0

Chi-square = 155.8, df=1; $p < .0000$

TABLE 2

Structure Matrix

	Function		
Discriminating Variable	1	2	3[1]
Keep Hong Kong politically stable	.61	-.12	-.08
Keep Hong Kong economically strong	.58	.18	-.10
Keep crime under control	.54	.08	.23
Keep public transportation working	.53	-.21	-.44
Keep medical services working	.43	-.03	-.23
Keep newspapers and television free	.34	-.20	.27
Talk about '1997' at work	.27	-.04	.06
Keep Hong Kong's present social system and life style	.25	-.03	.01
Frequency of reading daily newspapers	.18	.13	.04
Maintain freedom to travel	.15	.03	.05
Talk about '1997' while shopping	.12	.12	-.06
Listen to radio news today	-.06	.02	.06
Extrinsic utility	.20	.67	.10
Attention to news about '1997'	.12	.38	.02
Watch TV news today	-.07	.28	-.14
Relevance of Hong Kong government plans and decisions	-.03	.14	-.07
Read newspaper today	.08	.14	.05
Political efficacy	-.01	.11	-.10
Read agreement	.09	.11	.05
Talk about '1997' at home	.07	.07	.04
Intrinsic utility	-.14	-.17	.59
Read newsmagazine today	-.07	.17	-.41
Talk about '1997' with someone on the telephone	.01	.01	.02

[1] Third function is not statistically significant.

TABLE 3
Group Centroids

	Function		
Respondent Group	1	2	3[1]
1. False consensus (looking-glass)	-1.23	0.16	0.20
2. Liberal bias	-0.56	0.31	-0.74
3. Conservative bias	-0.32	-1.00	-0.09
4. Consensus (looking-glass)	0.22	0.04	0.03

[1] Third function is not statistically significant.

FIGURE 1

Schematic of Potential Patterns of Opinion Distribution

Own Opinion	Estimate of "Most People's" Opinion			
	Negative		Positive	
	Accurate	Inaccurate	Accurate	Inaccurate
Negative	Consensus	False Consensus[a]	Liberal Bias	Liberal Bias[a]
Positive	Conservative Bias	Conservative Bias[a]	Consensus	False Consensus[a]

[a] Each of these conditions represents pluralistic ignorance.

FIGURE 2

Schematic Representation of Opinion Groups Based on Approval of the '1997' Agreement

	Estimate of 'Most People's Opinion	
Own Opinion	Negative	Positive
Negative	False Consensus Minority[ab]	Liberal Bias Minority
Positive	Conservative Bias Minority[b]	Consensus Majority[a]

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[a] These groups are characterized by "looking-glass perception."

[b] These groups exhibit pluralistic ignorance.

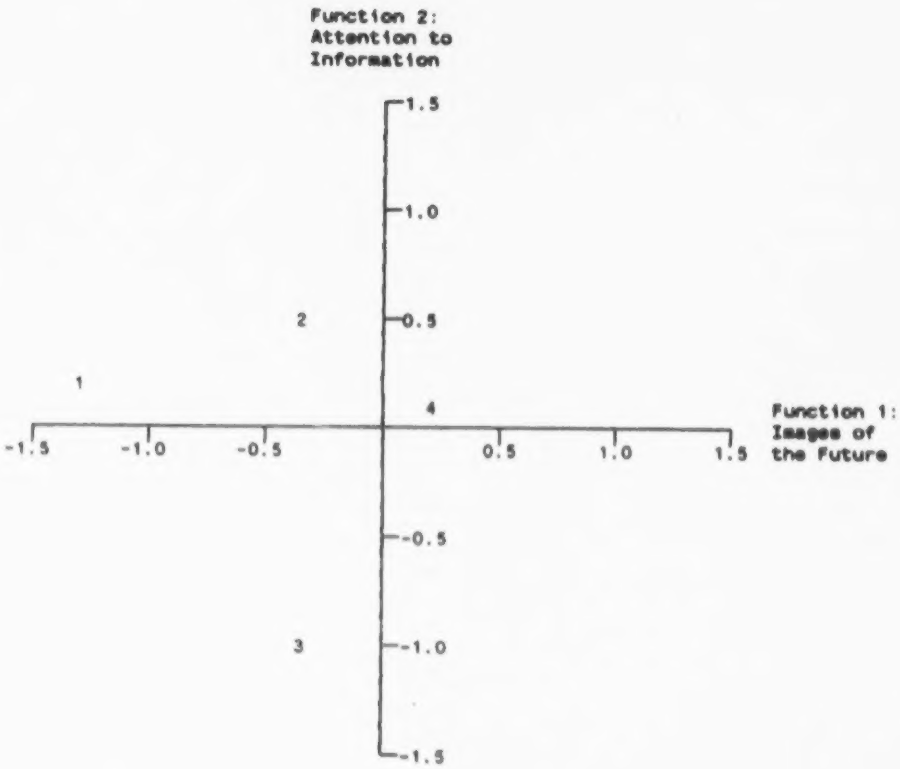

FIGURE 3: Plot of centroids for four approval groups on two significant discriminant functions. Group 1 = False Consensus, Group 2 = Liberal Bias, Group 3 = Conservative Bias, Group 4 = Consensus.